



Fall
2017
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Mouth of
The River

Publication of Oyster
River High School



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Meet The Staff

Curated by Aliyah Murphy

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Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for picking up a copy of Issue 1 of Mouth of the River. Our staff has put in a lot of hard work throughout this first quarter, and we are very excited for you to see our finished product.

This year, with 19 students, we have the biggest staff that Mr. Kelly has ever advised. This is also the first year we’ve had three editors-in-chief. Even with all of these changes, the staff has really bonded. We are not just classmates; we’re more like family. We spend time together bowling, barbecuing, and even travelling to New York City for a journalism conference at Columbia University. All this being said, we have also been sure to keep up a professional newsroom environment, complete with departments and dead-lines. Producing a quality publication for the Oyster River Community is not only our responsibility, but our privilege, and we are sure to treat it as such.

Our Social Media Manager, Lydia Hoffman, and our Website Manager, Coleman Moore, have been working diligently to expand our online presence. This year marks season 2 of MOR’s very own podcast, Voice of the River. A new initiative was brought forward this year by our Business Manager, Jordan Zercher. You may have noticed at the end of this magazine, we have a page of ads. In an effort to bring in more funds for our publication, we have reached out to local businesses, offering ads both in print and as part of the biweekly podcast. If you enjoy reading MOR, be sure to subscribe to have each of our four issues delivered to your door! Contact mornewspaper@gmail.com for more information about subscriptions.

We have a wide range of topics covered in this issue, from Eleanor Zwart’s lighthearted story detailing what our water bottles say about us, to Devan McClain’s article on how failure can actually be a positive experience. ORHS has gained a lot of new faces this year, and many were profiled by various MOR staff members. In an effort to break up the monotony of too many profiles, some of these articles will be going up on our website, mor.news.

With the help of our Creative Manager, Jess Speechley, we developed a cover theme that we felt really embodied the feeling of autumn in New England. Our hope is that the cover showcases the unity within our large staff this year.

On behalf of this year’s staff, we thank you for reading Issue 1 of Mouth of the River. So sit down, grab your mint tea (Mr. Kelly’s favorite), put your feet up, and enjoy!

Sincerely,

Anna Kate Munsey, Skylar Hamilton, and Zach Leichtman
Co Editors-in-Chief



Anna Kate Munsey ‘18

For her returning year on staff, Anna Kate was awarded the role of Co-Editor in Chief. She is, “very passionate about journalism. I love meeting new people through the articles I’m writing!” Anna Kate enjoys spending time with her dog, Gus, going on runs, hiking, and spending too much money online shopping. The farthest place she has vacationed to was when she took a trip to the west coast and visited Seattle, Oregon, and California. She has a not-so secret habit of being, “excessively organized,” referring specifically to her agenda planner.



Zach Leichtman ‘18

Zach takes on the role of Co-Editor in Chief for his second year on the *Mouth of the River* staff. Zach joined MOR because of his enjoyment in writing about topics he feels passionate about. In his downtime he enjoys watching as well as participating in sports, and listening to music. The farthest place he has traveled is Switzerland. Zach’s interesting habit is that he, “takes a lot of baths, but I’m not sure if that’d be considered a habit.”



Skylar Hamilton ‘18

Skylar is the Co-Editor in Chief on staff this year. She knew she wanted to join the school magazine since her freshman year. “My friend, Caitlin Lasher, was on staff and I loved the professional standards that the class was held to. I knew I wanted to be a part of that.” Skylar is typically busy with rehearsals for plays and just finished a run of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, where she took on the role of Nurse Ratched. Skylar has an abnormal amount of coffee running through her bloodstream daily due to her coffee addiction.



Felicia Drysdale '19

Felicia is the Subscriptions Manager on staff. When asked why she wanted to join *Mouth of the River* she replied, “I thought that’s what the cool people do?” and she is without a doubt correct. In her downtime, Felicia likes to, “lay in bed with my cats, Pesky and Pudge. I eat a lot of junk food and candy. I also like to ride the bench during soccer and hockey games!” Similarly to Abby Schmitt, the farthest place Felicia has traveled is Costa Rica. Her hidden talent is that she can shake her eyeballs. She continued to explain, “but my true talent is that I’m an extreme couponer.”



Phoebe Lovejoy '19

Phoebe is the Layout Editor on staff. She likes being involved within her community and thinks, “*Mouth of the River* is a great opportunity to connect with the community and get to know people through interviews, and you don’t really get that experience in any other class.” In her free time, Phoebe likes to cook (mostly breakfast foods), go on runs and leisurely walks, and she has a passion for toast. “I love toast. One time my friend and I went to the Big Bean, and we came back ten minutes after we left just to get more toast.”



Hannah Croasdale '18

Hannah is the Events Coordinator on staff. Her passion for journalism derived from her love of writing. “I wanted to see journalism in the actual newsroom atmosphere. *Mouth of the River* was as close as I could get to that.” In her free time, Hannah enjoys watching HGTV with her family, reading, and going out to dinner with friends, especially Flatbread or The Friendly Toast. The farthest place Hannah has traveled is England, where she visits extended family members. Hannah favors classical music when working on her homework; she finds it relaxing and easy to concentrate while listening to.



Sophie Graff '18

As Content Manager, Sophie finds stories she is passionate about, which makes writing journalism exciting for her. “I really enjoyed Journalism 1 and I love the chase of a good story,” she explained. Sophie’s freetime is nearly nonexistent. She participates in numerous clubs which take up the majority of her time. “I don’t really like not being busy.” The farthest Sophie has traveled is Hawaii. Many people might not know that Sophie has a secret talent of playing the piano.



Aliyah Murphy '18

Aliyah is the Photo Editor on staff. She wanted to join the school magazine because of her “dedication to creating an interesting story. I want to enhance my writing capabilities through real life scenarios, and *Mouth of the River* was the perfect opportunity for this.” Aliyah dedicates her freetime to playing soccer. Whenever time is available, she loves watching scary movies with her friends, going out to eat, and going on late night excursions. A secret talent Aliyah has is that she can play the piano. She also has a vigorous habit of cracking her neck, which Lydia Hoffman got her addicted to and is to be blamed for.



Coleman Moore '18

Coleman is the Website Manager on staff. He applied to *Mouth of the River* in hopes of proving himself as a writer. “I love Mr. Kelly’s teaching style and the way his class was set up.” In his free time, Coleman attends crew practice every day after school, and on most weekends. When he’s not at crew, he enjoys hiking, biking, and playing “a great deal of video games.” The farthest Coleman has traveled has been to Italy. He’s also been to Norway, and travels out to Oregon every year. Coleman can carry a disproportionate amount of oars at the same time, where he can travel from the water to the boathouse by himself after practice.



Lydia Hoffman '18

Lydia is the Social Media Manager on staff this year. She joined *Mouth of the River* because, “it looked like a lot of fun, and I had heard extremely positive things from past staffs. I also love attending the coffee houses.” In Lydia’s free time, she plays soccer, runs track, and spends time with friends and her dog, Piper. When she was in third grade, she journeyed to Europe for three whole months, traveling to multiple different places within Europe along the way. Lydia has a secret talent of picking up anything within appropriate size, with her feet. She admits to being “exceptionally bad at bottle flipping.”



Maisie Cook '18

Maisie takes on the role of Print Manager in the *Mouth of the River* staff. Her interest for journalism sparked from her desire to pursue journalism as a career, and the school magazine was a perfect way to replicate what she may take on in her near future. In Maisie’s free time, she enjoys spending time with her friends and her dog, Archie. “He’s a very good boy,” she added. She often watches *Parks and Rec* or *The Office* on Netflix. The farthest place Maisie has traveled is Australia, and claims she can, “make a killer spotify playlist.”



Nick Dundorf '18

Nick is the Op-Ed Editor of *Mouth of the River*. Nick is intrigued by the style of journalistic writing. “I’ve always liked the idea of working on MOR, and I wanted to contribute to the magazine because it’s something I really support.” In his free time, Nick finds pleasure from doing climate justice work and going backpacking in the White Mountains. The farthest place he has vacationed to is Italy. Nick secretly admitted that he “checked his closet for monsters until he was almost 15,” which honestly most of us have in common with him.



Jordan Zercher '19

Jordan is the Business Manager of *Mouth of the River*. She wanted to join *MOR* because of how impressed she was from previous staffs and their capabilities of writing and creativeness. In her free time, Jordan “works as a swim coach, a lifeguard, and swim instructor, so I’m always at the pool.” She has a passion for theatre and participates in the school plays as well as outside of school productions. She traveled to Australia alongside her family when her dad had a convention there, and ever since has been itching to go back. Jordan has an unfortunate habit of falling down in inconvenient places.



Lauren Quest '18

Lauren takes on the job of the Features Editor on staff. Lauren wanted to join *Mouth of the River* because, “I really enjoy the journalistic style of writing. I think that the newsroom environment that MOR has will help me grow as a writer.” She is the organizer for the Sustainability Club, therefore she spends a lot of her time outdoors. Lauren also volunteers at the Freedom Cafe in Durham, where she enjoys working with her friends. Lauren has traveled all the way to Hong Kong. Something that not many people know about Lauren is that she enjoys cleaning.



Abby Schmitt '19

Abby’s organization skills are what allows her to take on the role of Schedule Manager on staff. Her interest in journalism began because of the passion she had for the style of writing. “My sister participated in *Mouth of the River* and always spoke about how fun it was, after hearing that and enjoying Journalism 1, it really drove me to want to take part in MOR.” In Abby’s free time, she likes hanging with her friends and dogs. She also enjoys playing soccer and lacrosse. “My friends and I tried different fast food restaurants after every soccer game over the summer. Taco Bell was our last hurrah.” Abby has a hidden talent of wiggling her ears, and even shows off this talent when called bluff.



Devan McClain '19

Devan has the position of Sports Editor on staff. She is not too familiar with the sports side of journalism, and is looking forward to exploring that aspect in her position this year. Devan joined *Mouth of the River* because she liked how the magazine “gives writers the platform they need to have their work published and seen,” and how it utilizes teamwork to create a final product. She typically spends her free time playing soccer, running track, and hiking with her dogs. Devan travels frequently because of her parents’ jobs. The farthest place she’s gone to is Australia. She has an uncontrollable habit of cracking her ankles.



Eleanor Zwart '18

Eleanor is the News Editor on staff. She felt passionate about Journalism 1 and, “liked the idea of being on a publication. It’s a more real life scenario than a high school class. I joined *Mouth of the River* because I had seen people in the past produce some really cool pieces.” In the bulk of her freetime, Eleanor likes to, “avoid Aliyah Murphy at all costs. I enjoy hanging out with my dogs, Charlie and Roxie, hiking mountains, playing sports, and eating good food. That’s all I really do in my life.” Eleanor is secretly the “mom” of her friend group. She shuttles around all her friends in Wendy, her green minivan, where anything anyone could possibly need is contained in a bin beneath the center console.



Jess Speechley '18

Jess is the Creative Director for her second year on staff. She joined *Mouth of the River* because of her passion for writing and showcasing her work. She also is interested in seeing what other students are capable of. In her down-time, Jess enjoys the simple pleasure of staying at home and relaxing. The farthest she’s been from home is when she went to San Diego, California, which she described as an amazing place. Jess cracks her back in what she explained as a “very bizarre way. I do it by leaning backwards and pushing my hip in.”



Hunter Madore '18

Hunter is the Circulation Manager on *Mouth of the River*. Hunter first got to know Mr. Kelly when he moved to Durham, and he was allowed the privilege of being in his advisory. He took Journalism the first year he moved here, which is where he discovered the school magazine. Ever since then, Hunter was determined to join MOR his senior year. In his freetime, Hunter rock climbs, spends time with friends, and walks his 175 lb newfoundland, Bear. The farthest place Hunter has traveled is Florida, and his secret talent is one of which many envy: he can juggle!

Women in STEM



Ella Cedarholm, a junior at the University of New Hampshire, sits in her physics lab. There are eight other students, all of which are men. The group was trying to find the answer to a simple physics question. Cedarholm found the answer first, and was trying to help out her lab partners.

“They were looking at me like I had four eyes,” she said. The boys gave up trying to comprehend what she was saying, and called over the TA, “The TA said word-for-word what I explained, and immediately the lightbulbs went off. I was infuriated... they just didn’t feel like there was any way the one girl at the table might have figured it out before them.”

This is not an uncommon occurrence for women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The National Science Foundation’s Report of 2016 states that women make up half of the total U.S. college-educated workforce, but only 29% of the STEM workforce. Historically speaking, women have been told that they aren’t stereotypically good at math and science, and that it is a “man’s job.” Today we know that this isn’t the case.

For decades women have been fighting for true equality, and they have made great progress. Yet they haven’t been able to “catch up” when it come to careers in STEM. “I still think there’s this superiority complex... there’s this feeling like men are the leaders, and the engineers are the leaders of our society right now,” said Cedarholm.



—We are in a new age where technology is guiding our society. In a world where men have for, a long time, been viewed as “superior,” it’s no surprise that they’re also dominating the newest and most important careers.

Cathi Stetson, the Computer Science teacher at ORHS, has always considered herself to be an early adapter to technology. “To be excited for technology was really rare for a women... I mean even if you look at our [Information Technology] department, it’s mostly men,” said Stetson. Throughout her career as a teacher, Stetson has often struggled to gain respect from the IT departments she has worked with. “They didn’t think that I really understood, and they didn’t see me as a value because I was a woman.”

Students at ORHS have grown up with Stetson in this authoritative role, so it doesn’t seem as abnormal to them. “Our school is really good at creating an equal learning experience for men and women, but girls in general tend to be shyer in class... now girls are showing strength in math and science, sometimes over men,” said Jackie Settele (‘18).

Settele wants to go into engineering, and is taking the new Intro to Engineering class. She estimated that there were only 4-5 girls in her class, which is similar to the number of girls in advanced programming. “Last year, I only had one female in the class. This year I have four,” said Stetson, “I think there is a point where sometimes the girls feel a little embarrassed that they’re the only girls in here. Like they have an interest that they’re not supposed to!”

Women all over the world need to abandon the mindset that men are smarter than them. “Women were told they weren’t good at math and science... That’s one of the reasons why I like it... I’m up for the challenge and I can prove that I can do it,” said Settele. This isn’t about men vs. women. It is about empowering and giving equal representation to all of the women in the world.

-Lauren Quest

WILL A SERVICE TRIP

It is 7:30 AM. A sixteen-year-old girl climbs out of her rugged, wooden bed in a small screened-in room in Punta Mala, Costa Rica. She strolls out to the white sand beach located right in front of base camp. She and her fellow group members cradle newly hatched sea turtles in their hands and then watch them crawl down to the ocean's shore. Her first reaction is amazement, while her next thought is how the experience will look on her college application.

High schoolers are often found seeking out “resume building” opportunities. Because of the constant pressure of social standards, students are led to believe their college application has to be above all others. As a result, teenagers who take part in worldwide service trips tend to focus more on how it will look on paper, instead of truly taking advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

There are many service trip programs available for teenagers. The varying programs provide teenagers with different cultural experiences including communicating with individuals from a different country to building a schoolhouse in a small village.

The various trips can last as long as two to three years or as short as less than a week.

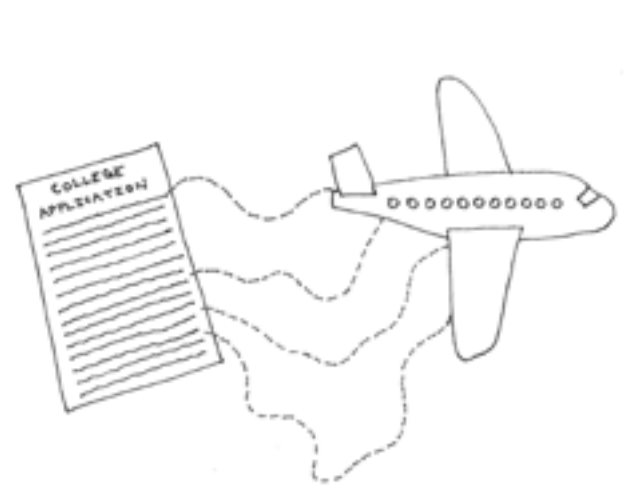
According to “Things No One Tells You About Going on Short-Term Mission Trips” from *Relevant Magazine*, around “1.5 million people from the United States participate in short-term mission trips every year.” It is safe to say a large handful of those individuals are teenagers who go on mission trips in order to enhance their college applications.

“There are a ton of kids at my school who go on these church sponsored mission trips, and half of them don't even go to church! They always come back saying, ‘I just hope this helps me get into college,’” noted Savannah Mather (‘18), from Newtown, Connecticut, who was positively impacted by the Turtle Conservation service trip she went on this past summer.

Many are in agreement with Mather.

High schoolers feel the need to travel to exotic places and include the experience in their college application to increase their chances of getting accepted into a college.

However, in reality, William Fitzsimmons, Harvard's dean of admissions and financial aid, noted, “people shouldn't feel they have to do something exotic to impress admissions committees,” in “College



Admissions Secrets: Will a Summer Trip Abroad Get You into Harvard?” from *Daily Beast*.

Likewise, Richard Shaw, Stanford's dean of undergraduate admissions, stated in “College Admissions Secrets: Will a Summer Trip Abroad Get You into Harvard?” from *Daily Beast*, “what we care about is that students have done something that means something to them. It's not a good idea to engage in something because the student or family believes it will augment their ability to get in.”

The teenagers who truly value their service trip and the once-in-a-lifetime experience gain several benefits.

According to, “Reasons Every Teenager Should Go on a Mission Trip” done by Youthworks, service trips: “bring teenagers together; strengthen teenagers' perspective; challenge teenagers' comfort zones; empower teenagers; and allow teenagers to connect with the world.”

Youthworks outlines the real reasons why every teenager should go on a worldwide service trip. After participating in a Turtle Conservation service trip in Costa Rica this past summer, I have truly grown as an individual. My knowledge, appreciation, and awareness of wildlife conservation has expanded. Being one with nature, and witnessing wildlife first hand, positively changed my view on the importance of wildlife preservation. Each and every day, I learned more information regarding turtle conservation in Costa Rica and about the lives of those who live in Costa Rica.

The unfamiliar culture and lifestyle allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and experience new situations that I would not experience in my regular day-to-day life. For example, my service group and I went ziplining at the top of a mountain in the middle of a rain forest. After completing three out of the ten ziplines, it suddenly started to pour, which was then followed by lightening and thunder. The only “shelter” at the top of the mountain was a metal cover over a metal bench, which was not the most ideal source of shelter in the middle of a thunderstorm.

To escape the storm, my fellow group members and I had to immediately take off our harnesses and metal carabiners, line up in a single file line, and slide ourselves down the backside of the mountain, where nearly thirty species of poisonous snakes lived. This situation sure was terrifying, however we

GET YOU INTO COLLEGE?

conquered the challenge together and once we returned to the bottom safely, we all felt unstoppable.

In addition to experiencing new challenges, living in the middle of a rainforest with no internet connection, limited water, and very rustic living conditions made me realize that only the essentials, being water, food, and shelter, are needed.

The lack of resources and phone usage allowed me to disconnect from reality and became close friends with my fellow group members who were originally complete strangers. Towards the end of the trip, we all felt like a family, which made saying goodbye one of the hardest goodbyes I have ever experienced.

Mather noted that she also gained an abundance of knowledge, perspective and experience from her service trip: the trip changed her life. “I look at the world differently, with a greater appreciation for life. Costa Rica's famous saying is Pura Vida and I now apply that idea to my own life on a daily basis.”

Charlotte Clarke (‘18) was also astonished by her service trip experience. “Seeing the different culture [in Jamaica] and living situations for the kids who were at the orphanages was shocking.” Clarke continued by saying that taking care of the kids at the orphanage, “was a lot of work, but it was great in the end.”

Mather and Clarke both mentioned they are open to going on another service trip in the near future.

However, despite Mather's positive experience and willingness to go on another service trip, she is set back by the fact that, “people now think that being a good person only looks good on paper, when really it's a part of being human that should drive us to help out one another... not the resume.”

Hopefully teenagers will begin to look beyond what a service trip looks like on a piece of paper and go on a worldwide mission trip to help mend and reconstruct the Earth's cracks that the past generations and the current generation have created. 



“People now think that being a good person only looks good on paper, when really it's a part of being human that should drive us to help out one another... not the resume.”

-Abby Schmitt

The Truth Behind Secret Societies



“You end up knowing everything about someone since the day they were born: their struggles, emotions, fears.”

In 1947, the commencement address at University of Virginia’s graduation was interrupted when a small explosion occurred on stage. After the smoke cleared, a check for \$177,777.77 was found floating to the ground. The Seven Society was believed to be behind this.

The Seven Society is one of many collegiate secret societies. The organizations are composed of a select group of seniors who have displayed loyalty to their school and have stood out as leaders among their peers. There is a long list of conspiracy theories attached to these groups. Most heavily noted is Skull and Bones, of Yale. Wikipedia will tell you that Skull and Bones is a branch of the Illuminati, created the nuclear bomb, controls the CIA, planned the Kennedy assassination, and dug up and stole the skull of the Native American warrior Geronimo from his grave.

Members of Skulls and Bones as well as other secret societies are feared because they’re able to use their connections to people in power to make their way up through the ranks of America’s elite. George W. Bush, George H.W. Bush, William Howard Taft, Lanny Davis, who would go on to become a White House special counsel in the Clinton Administration, and many more people of power, have come out of secret societies further emphasizing their connection to the United States government.

Many fear that secret societies are part of the United State’s alleged shadow government, or notion that real political power resides with private groups exercising power behind the scenes rather than with publicly elected representatives.

Other rumors include that members of the Seven Society are only revealed after their death, when a wreath of black magnolias in the shape of a “7” is placed at the gravesite, and the bell tower of the University Chapel chimes at seven-second intervals on the seventh dissonant chord when it is seven past the hour. It’s said that they call themselves The Seven Society because eight people were invited to a game of cards for the first meeting and only seven showed up.

The Seven Society shares common conspiracies with all secret societies: meetings only occur after dark, with members dressed in black capes with hoods to conceal their faces.

According to a past member of Yale’s Wolf’s Head Society, who in this paper will be referred to as David for privacy purposes, these theories are nonmember theories.

Gabrielle O’Donoghue, graduate of Dartmouth (’17), says that, “as time goes on you become more exposed to individuals who are actual members so you start to learn what is a rumor and what is real.”

David argues that the societies are simply focused on the idea of alumni tradition, and a composition of leaders. He explains, “the reason for secrecy is open expression. Nothing you say in those walls goes out of it.”

Contrary to popular belief, secret society meetings are actually very structured. For example, Yale Societies met on Thursdays and Fridays.

On Thursdays in Wolf’s Head, everyone shared a current event, something related to history or an important political idea, and lastly, personal history. According to David, personal history was most important and could last for hours. “We would share things in a way we’d never done before and would never do again,” he says.

The group would meet with an alumni guest on Sunday nights. For example, George W. Bush would go back to Skull and Bones.

David explains that a lot of the quirks of Secret Societies exist to make it evident that secret societies are different from other groups. “I don’t think I would have known so much about a group of fifteen any other way,” he says.

As beneficial as the societies are for building friendships within the group, some wonder if the idea of these societies is beneficial to student bodies as a whole. O’Donoghue says, “as someone who was not a member, it felt exclusionary at times.” David also agrees that a legitimate argument against secret societies is that they take away from other campus groups.

Additionally, Fergus Cullen, graduate of Yale (’94), says that “like many rumors, there is some truth to them.”

An investigation led by Dartmouth officials found that on April 27, 1989, sixteen students from the Sphinx Society took part in the group’s annual scavenger hunt which resulted in the theft of paintings, photographs, and other items.

In recent years, the Chris Gethard Show made several rape allegations against members of the Order of Gimghoul. The allegations have remained unfounded, but with the rumors above being based on truths, who knows what other rumors may be based on facts. The rape allegations may deserve further investigation. 

-Phoebe Lovejoy

LUFTY



member of a local band and also a self taught professional mixer was incredibly open to giving him a helping hand. The technology allowed his sound to be equalized and take on experienced tone.

While first experimenting with his songs and working on recording, he was unable to get a positive response from the some of the people around him. “I think a few people were judgemental and made fun of it, just because he was the only one making and releasing music. Myself and others who were his friends supported him and his music because it was obvious that it was and still is his passion,” says close friend Ian Miles.

A few years prior, Wagner had a considerably younger audience, and most did not take much notice of Wagner’s songs. He believes his bad sound quality first pushed away the audience, but his new quality draws people in, especially since they notice the lyrics and songs more and more. “People judged his music before they had even heard it, but once they did, I think most people’s negative opinions changed to positive affirmations,” explained Laurel Gordon (‘19), a fellow classmate.

“Lufty translates directly to air person, but it’s supposed to be sort of a dreamer who doesn’t really think of money as important, but is more focused on the mind.”

Wagner’s lyrics are influenced by anything in his life that catches his eye. He comes up with most of his ideas in his “state of thinking,” where he finds the most inspiration and reflects upon himself. Wagner also contemplated his stage name “Lufty,” coming from the Yiddish word luftmensch.

In 2016, Wagner began collaborating with Bengt Jobe (‘17), a self managed recording artist known as “J8nT.” Jobe had approached Wagner during a music theory class after listening to some of his SoundCloud hits. They met again when Jobe wrote a profile article on Wagner for his Journalism 1 class. Jobe was pleasantly surprised to find that he and Wagner shared many common interests and goals. “We really hit it off from the start. Him and I both see the same vision and feed off of each other. We also both happen to be pretty creative which leads to us coming up with some pretty awesome ideas,” said Jobe.

Wagner was overly motivated to record a sensational song. “Trying to go for the first place,” was the nature of the ideas. It was more hard hitting than most of his music. “First Place (feat. J8nT) [Prod. by Cxdy]” resulted in him getting more plays than he normally received. It was not the type of music he was typically into, but what most people enjoy in rap and hip-hop lately.

Max and I usually start with a clean slate and try to find a beat that we both like after that, we establish a vibe or feeling that we’re going for and then the words just kinda come out of thin air,” explained Jobe. Shockingly, Wagner and Jobe wrote and recorded “First Place (feat. J8nT) [Prod. by Cxdy]” in only four hours.

Jobe and Wagner have since collaborated on multiple occasions, as well as performed at *Mouth of the River’s* quarterly Coffee House event. “He sort of took me out of my shell. He’s also the reason why I performed for the first time,” said Wagner.

As time progresses and Wagner’s songs acquire more and more plays, he’s realized he aspires to form a career with his music in the future, preferably independently. “I really hope to see Max become huge. He puts so much effort into all his music, he truly deserves it. Making music and sharing that music is obviously what he loves, so I hope that more people can listen to his music and experience his overwhelming amount of effort,” says Miles. The impact music has been on Wagner’s life has been so significant, he senses many music opportunities in the future. With the support of classmates, peers, and the community, together they believe Wagner’s music career will take flight.



What’s to Come?

Wagner’s latest hit came out a few weeks ago, “Final Lap (feat. J8nT) [Prod. by hyperforms]”, and should be exceeding over 1,000 plays on SoundCloud in a number of weeks, maybe even days. Wagner is currently working on a new EP (extended play), which is a collection of songs, he’s titling “Lufty.” This should be dropped before 2018. His newest songs “Hopeful (Prod. by Blunted)” and “Final Lap (feat. J8nT) [Prod. by hyperforms]”, are just a few singles that will be included in the EP. The final single to join this will be dropped in early November, 2017. This project has lowkey instrumentals and a strong focus on his lyrics. His current goal is to have his voice truly show in his songs, and to have people notice what he’s saying. He plans to release some new pieces at some upcoming *Mouth of the River* coffee houses. 

- Felicia Drysdale
Photos Credit: Alex Malaison

To listen to Max or contact him, visit any of the following:

Instagram: @luftymensch
Soundcloud: @lufty
Twitter: @luftymensch
Youtube: @lufty

Haunted High

As dusk falls and the only sounds are the buzz of florescent lights and the moan of a far off floor polisher, things begin to get a bit spooky at ORHS. Unbenounced to students, many strange occurrences have been observed by faculty members at ORHS. These are their stories, including shadow people, moving objects, and a heartwarming tale of someone we may not have fully lost. Many custodians report having seen shadow people or “non entities” run down nearby hallways. They never see them straight on. These entities are always in their peripheral vision and even if they chase after they disappear with no sign of anyone ducking into a classroom or around a corner. “If multiple people, ya know, corroborate the story then it’s like ‘wow’ makes ya pause for thought,” said one custodian. When the custodians were asked what stories they had about paranormal things at the high school, they laughed and said, “There aren’t any we can tell you that would be school appropriate.” Some custodians did eventually come forward with stories, After some persuasion some were willing to come forward with some stories, but wished to stay anonymous.

Ghosts In The Locker Room

One night, when all the students had gone home, a custodian was cleaning the boys locker room. He went out to his cart to get some more cleaning supplies, and when he returned, he found all the doors to the bathroom stalls locked but no students were around nor anyone else. He continued to clean when suddenly the lights shut off and he heard the sound of sink faucets running. When he went and turned back on the lights, what he saw surprised him, The sink was not running, neither was it wet, there was no one around either. As soon as he finished cleaning and left without ever finding an explanation.

“Maybe it’s the wind.”



“What’s a kid doing at the school this late?”

The Man In Black

Around ten thirty at night, a custodian was cleaning the hallway next to the cafeteria and the art rooms. He looked through the double doors across the cafeteria, and saw a six-foot-man dressed all in black, in a long coat and hat standing next to the vending machines: “I only saw the back of him so it was a little odd... like something doesn’t look right here.” As our fearless custodian watched the man whose attention was on the vending machine, he wondered, “what’s a kid doing at the school this late?” Then he picked up his stuff, moving to the main part of the cafeteria where there aren’t any doors, and looked in; there was no one there. He quickly thought, “well maybe he went out the side door down that long hall,” so he went and looked down the corridor but there was nothing. “There was no time between when I saw him till when I did not see him where he could have exited any of the doors, or hide anywhere,” stated the custodian.

An Extremely Rare Coin

One afternoon, down in room 134, Mrs. Stanley and a student sat doing work when a coin sitting on the table next to them slid off rolled across the floor and out the door.

“Ha-ha-ha-ha someone must have tied a string to it or something,” said Mrs. Stanley. She went out into the hall to find who had the other end of the string, but when she found the coin, there was no string on it and no one around; “Maybe it’s the wind,” thought Mrs. Stanley.

They brought the coin back inside the room and placed it on the table after closing the windows. After a couple minutes the exact same thing happened; the coin slid off the table and under the door.

-Coleman Moore

Farewell to Finals?

Final exams: a term that is often synonymous with sleepless nights, studying for hours on end, and the occasional panic attack. But is all the hassle and stress associated with finals necessary? Jackie Settele (‘18) believes she has a solution to this ongoing problem.

At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, Settele created a petition proposing that a student with a grade of 90 or higher in a class should not be required to take the final exam. She was given the idea to create the petition after hearing that this policy had been beneficial for students in nearby districts like Bedford and Coe-Brown. The petition was met with great approval from Oyster River students, and earned upwards of 200 supporters.

Principal Suzanne Filippone has seen similar policies work well at other schools, and was excited when Settele proposed the idea. “I think it would be beneficial to those who are already under a lot of stress,” Filippone says.

Julianna Caldicott (‘19) reiterates Filippone’s comments, stating that “no one wants to take finals, and eliminating them in certain classes would be a mini reward for our hard work.”

The stress that she and her peers are under served as inspiration for Settele when she created the petition. “Finals just make the stress that students are already under so much worse,” she says. “This policy would allow students to focus on what they need to improve upon rather than stressing over something they don’t need to.”

“Eliminating finals in certain classes would be a mini reward for our hard work.”

However, not all students are on the same page as Caldicott and Settele. While Kendall Bird (‘18) empathizes with the stress that her peers face during finals, she also worries that this policy could be unfair to certain students. “I think the change will give more reason for kids who have poor grades to feel bad about it,” she says. “It will allow for a clear division, which will essentially share everyone’s grade with the class.” Bird believes that an alternative solution should be crafted that would meet the needs of all students.

While Settele has gained the support of the principal, Filippone is not the person who has the final say in moving forward with this policy. Filippone states that, “the next step is to go to the faculty with it and see how they feel.” Settele hopes to present this policy to the entire staff before the end of the semester to see if they are in favor of moving forward with it.

“I find it to be kind of elitist. Some students work very little to get a 90, while others have to work extremely hard. A 90 is not achievable for all of our students.”

Social studies teacher Brian Zottoli is already familiar with the policy, and expresses concern over its fairness. “I find it to be kind of elitist,” he says. “Some students work very little to get a 90, while others have to work extremely hard. A 90 is not achievable for all of our students.”

Settele believes that final exams should be a way for students to end the school year on a high note. “It should be an opportunity for students to bring up their grade, rather than causing stress and bringing it down,” she says. Settele looks forward to hearing what staff members have to say when she presents this proposal in the near future. Until then, the fate of final exams at Oyster River High School remains unknown.



-Maisie Cook

Smokescreen: Why Students *JUUL*



Artwork by Emma Kovalcik

The first thing that pops onto the screen when you visit the JUUL Vapor website is a banner which you must click, verifying that you are 21 years of age or older. There are two potential outcomes. If you click that you're not of legal age to buy, you get redirected to a government-sponsored website called teen.smokefree.gov, which warns against the dangers of adolescent nicotine use. Alternatively, if you click that you are over 21, you may continue onto the website before this claim must be proven further, as you are required to scan your ID in order to purchase any products. But for some, the website's age restrictions surrounding vaporizers are a small barrier to overcome.

"I just use my mom's ID," said an anonymous user from Oyster River High School. "I get them online and then I ship them to my house. It's easy."

This is not a foreign scene for many at ORHS, where the website that sells JUULs, a brand of e-cigarette, is receiving increasingly more traffic from students. In part, this is due to their sleek and compact design, which allows the user to vape more discreetly than ever before. However, with limited studies on the long-term effects of vaporizers, combined with the relatively recent introduction of JUULs to the school environment, students and staff alike are concerned about the increase in usage and the effects that this may have in the future.

A JUUL is made up of four basic parts. The first three are located within the device's body, and include: the battery, a temperature regulator, and sensors, which display the charge of the battery. Sitting above the body is the fourth part, called a JUULpod, or pod for short. The pod is replaceable, and contains a flavored liquid, such as mango or crème brûlée, which is created from nicotine salts. When the user inhales, the vapor is released into the lungs and held briefly before it is exhaled, sending nicotine into the bloodstream. A single pod contains roughly 200 of these puffs, and holds the same amount of stimulant found within a pack of cigarettes, the very product JUULs are being marketed to replace.

Despite this attempt at product substitution, JUULs are becoming an increasingly more common first choice for nicotine consumption among teenagers. "It's a popularity thing. It started with a small group, then [it] became a social class surrounding JUULs. If you had a JUUL, people would come up to you, talk to you, and then ask to use it. Therefore, you were more in the loop," said another underage user. A third high schooler agreed, appointing the sudden growth in popularity to the fact that, "everyone has one... every kid wants one now because so many people have them."

On the other hand, administration and staff don't quite have the same understanding of why JUULs have become so sought-after. Brian Zottoli, a ORHS social studies teacher, said, "I have no idea [why]. I think there are a lot of people who feel they need to be using some type of substance to

get by, and this is one they can get away with using in school or regularly."

Zottoli is right about the fact that many students have been able to "get away with using [it] in school," as JUULs, which are both thin and only inches long, look very similar to many flash drives. In fact, multiple administration members admitted they did not know what a JUUL was, and were uncertain they would recognize one. Suzanne Filippone, the principal at ORHS, said, "it depends what the context [of the situation] is," when explaining whether she would be

able spot a JUUL.

In an effort to try to educate faculty members about vapes and e-cigarettes, Filippone sent an email to the high school's staff in mid-September, which contained links to help inform teachers about Oyster River's latest trend. In the email, she requested that the faculty members take a look at the two links attached, which directed them to the homepages of JUUL and BO, a similar type of vaporizer. Filippone stated that this email was sent in order to help teachers "know exactly what to keep their eyes out for."

JUUL users, however, are skeptical of teacher's unsuspecting attitudes towards the situation. "I feel like some of them know what's up. Teachers have actually [said] hi to me and vape has literally come out of my mouth...

They've seen it," said an anonymous user.

Yet administration argues that it is difficult to catch a student using a JUUL for various reasons. "It's hard to discover, it's hard to uncover, it's hard to detect," said Mark Milliken, the Dean of Faculty at ORHS. He explained that between the size, quickly dissipating vapor, and lack of smell, JUULs are more difficult to locate than cigarettes. "When I was in school, if you smoked a cigarette, everybody could smell it... This is so underground now," said Milliken. Legally, if a student were to be caught using a JUUL during school or on school property, it would result in confiscation, which is "the same consequence as if you were caught with cigarettes," according to Holly Malasky, Durham Police Department's Student Resource Officer at ORHS.

In addition to having the vape confiscated by the school, Filippone explained that, "if you're underage and you're engaging in something that is illegal, that can be turned over to the police." This is because the state of New Hampshire declares that the legal age to use vaporizers and tobacco products is 18 or older, however, it is still a violation of law at all ages when used on school grounds.

If the school did decide to to give the case to law enforcement, "it would be considered a [non-criminal] violation level offense, and there would be a fine associated with it," explained Officer Malasky.

However, due to the current variety of outcomes that could stem from the school's protocol, many students feel that there is less of a chance that they will need to face the repercussions in school. Oftentimes, this can mean that they don't give the other side effects of vaping much thought, either.

"[Vapes] cause less cancer than cigarettes" said a user, referencing the fact that JUULs do not contain the carcinogens which are found in other substitution products.

Though to many, the main concern is not the carcinogens, but instead, the nicotine content and what that could lead to down the road. "It's a disaster because it's going to mean we have a lot of people addicted to nicotine, which we've moved away from as a society. This is a major backwards step," said Zottoli.

"It's so easy to just put it away and not use it. When it's not near me, I don't ask for it or want it. But maybe there are some kids at the school who couldn't do that."

Robert Quaglieri, the health teacher at ORHS, agreed that JUULs may lead their users on a path towards nicotine-addiction. He believes the variety of nicotine-based flavors will keep people interested, at a cost. Quaglieri is concerned about other health issues that may arise, asking, "who knows what nicotine vapor into the lungs will do?"

One short term effect of this nicotine exposure from the JUUL is that it "gives you a head rush really quickly and easily," according to an anonymous student. The World Health Association accounts these 'head rushes' as being the result of nicotine quickly entering the bloodstream through the lungs, further explaining why vaporizer popularity is on the rise: for its seemingly pleasurable, short-term effects.

Quaglieri explained that these very effects are what make it so difficult to teach kids about vaping during health class because "the long term implications aren't totally known yet. It's hard to give them accurate in-

formation about what's going to happen down the road."

So far, users have not seen the effects of their habits, or so it seems. "I work out every day, and [JUULing] hasn't made a difference yet. I've been ripping it for a while... I feel like if it was really that bad I would feel it when I'm running," said a JUUL owner.

"We have a lot of people addicted to nicotine, which we've moved away from as a society. This is a major backwards step."

However, the same user admits that although they do not feel like they need their JUUL to function, they acknowledged it could be possible for some. "It's so easy to get addicted. To me though, it's so easy to just put it away and not use it. When it's not near me, I don't ask for it or want it. But maybe there are some kids at the school who couldn't do that."

Another student reported that they take around 100 "rips" a day, yet they stated, "I could stop. I'm positive. It's not something that I need to function, it's just something that I like to use."

So if students aren't feeling the need to use them, why are JUULs still so popular?

"[The JUUL] is just a short term thing. It's like being drunk for two minutes," reported a student user. Another high schooler explained that, "JUULing is pretty social." However, all the student users interviewed agreed: the JUUL is not their top choice. Many admitted they would rather smoke marijuana than JUUL.

A student who is against the use of JUULs thinks that this can again be explained by the social culture surrounding e-cigarettes. "I think [JUULing] is just something to do, but I don't think it's a peer pressure thing. I think people see their friends doing it and want to try it, too."

A user agreed, simply stating, "teenagers JUUL because they like to experiment."

This desire for experimentation is scientifically proven. According to "Teen Brain: Behavior, Problem Solving, and Decision Making," published by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, "studies have shown that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood and adolescence and well into early adulthood." The pre-frontal cortex, which controls reasoning, is one of the last parts to develop. The effect of this is that teenagers are more likely to take part in risky behaviours, such as using drugs or vaporizer products.

Another major contributor to the rising usage of JUULs lies within their accessibility. One student user admitted they "didn't even want to say the number of pods" that they had sold to others, but that it was "easily over 100." This, combined with the previously mentioned online availability of these products, has given more and more people the means to access nicotine at a constant rate.

Despite this accessibility leading to a high number of users at Oyster River, Filippone believes vaping is a problem at all high schools, and isn't district specific. She stated, "we can make rules and give people consequences. We can talk about restorative justice and educate people about it. But ultimately, if you're standing next to someone in the core and they're vaping, what's the response?"

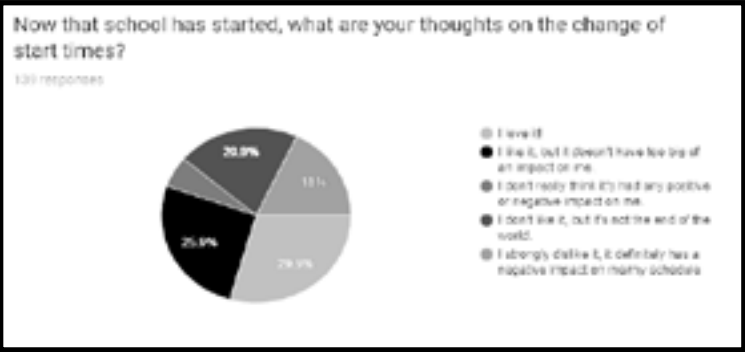
Adding to this statement, Filippone, and the rest of the administration, urge students to speak up to their classmates, asking, "do students find this acceptable? Because it's their school. If you don't want it in your school, then is that something that students are willing to say?" 

- Lydia Hoffman and Devan Mc-

Survey Shows ORHS Students Have Mixed Feelings on New Start Times

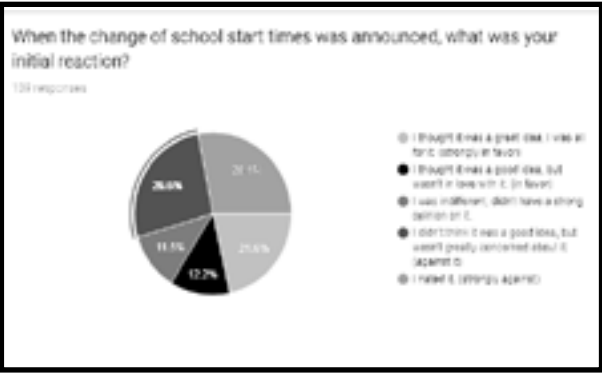
A recent survey conducted by MOR has shown that students at Oyster River High School are largely divided in their opinions on the newly introduced school times and class period schedules. The survey, which was conducted during the third week of school, collected 139 responses, with 95% of these being from ORHS upperclassmen. It asked students a range of questions about their feelings on the new times and schedules, including how these have impacted their life inside and outside of school.

Students’ initial reactions upon hearing about the new start times were as diverse as their feelings on the issue now. Among those surveyed, 21% said that when the time changes were announced, they were strongly in favor of them, while 28% answered that they hated the idea of a later start and end to the school day. Another 27% of respondents said that they were against the idea of the newer times, but that it did not concern them too much, while 12% were moderately in favor of it and 12% were indifferent on the situation.

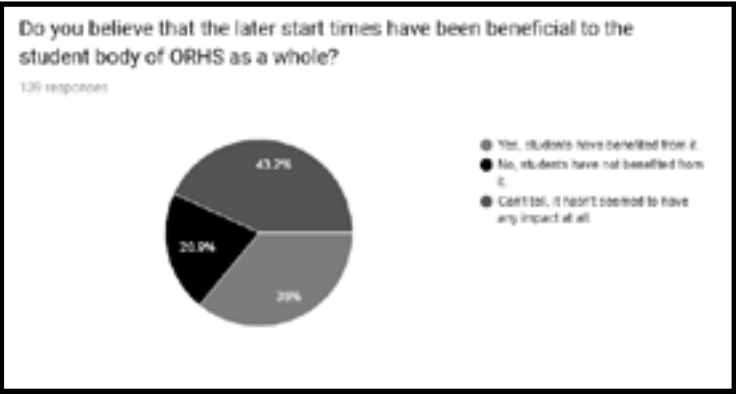


Although only 33% of students were initially in favor (either moderately or strongly) of the new start times when they were first announced, nearly 56% of students have expressed positive feelings towards the new times now that they are in place, with 30% of students saying they ‘love’ the change, and another 26% saying that they ‘like it,’ but it hasn’t had a huge impact on them thus far. This significant increase in approval could be impacted by the fact that students’ initial reaction to the announcement of new start times was during the school year last year, meaning they may have been in a comfortable ‘flow’ of things at that point and a change seemed unnecessary. However, a fresh start to the school year may have allowed students to realize the proposed benefits, and adjust their schedule around the new times.

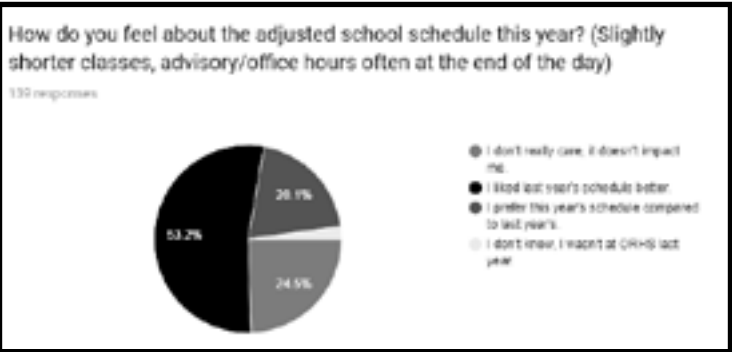
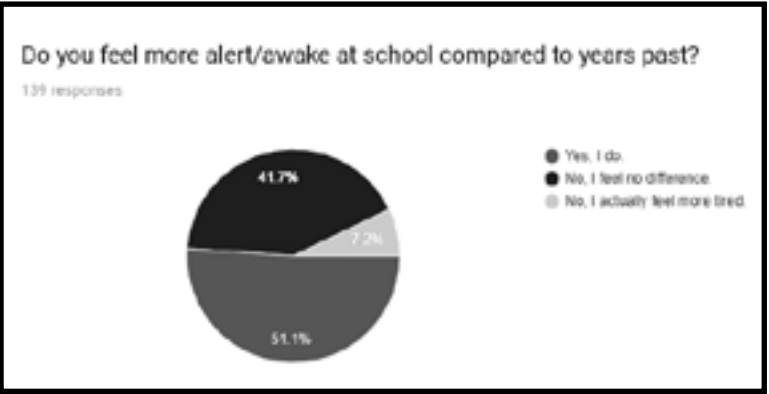
Currently, 39% of students do not like the new start times (either moderately or strongly), compared to 55% who were originally against the idea when it was announced. The survey indicated a nearly 10% difference between students who ‘hated’ the idea of the new start times originally (28% of respondents) and those who ‘hated’ them throughout the first few weeks of school (18% of respondents). The change to less ‘hate’ for the new start times may suggest that students who were originally extremely against them have seen that their daily schedules are not impacted as much as they originally expected; it may have been tempting to see the 40 minute shift as something much more disruptive.



Another part of the survey reveals concern about an issue that many saw as one of the greatest possible problems of later start times. Nearly 54% of students said that the new start times have forced them to stay up later (than in past school years) at least ‘sometimes’, while almost 20% of students reported that the new times forced them to stay up later regularly. In addition, only 17% of students surveyed reported that the new start times have yet to have any impact on at least one night of sleep for them, compared to in years past. The fact that a majority of students have reported staying up later is expected, as almost all after school activities or student work schedules have been forced to be pushed back due to the change in school time. Additionally, as students progress through high school they often take more challenging classes that require greater amounts of homework, which could be another explanation for these data.

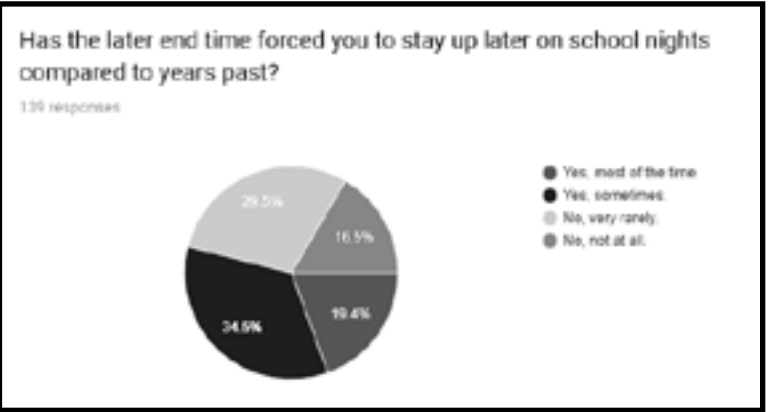


On the other hand, the administration would be proud of the fact that over half of the students surveyed (51%) claimed that they feel more alert/awake at school than they have in years past, while just over 7% reported feeling more tired. The other 42% of respondents said that they have yet to consistently feel a different level of alertness at this point in the school year. This general rise in alertness is somewhat surprising given that over half of students also said that they have been forced to stay up later, but this could indicate that the time of day itself has impacted the energy level of many students. Perhaps waking up in a lighter setting, after sunrise, helps students begin the day in a brighter and livelier way.



With all the variance in answers came a mixture of opinions within each individual’s answers. For example, just because someone answered that they felt more awake/alert at school this year, did not necessarily mean that they also answered that they liked the new start times, and vice versa. Additionally, others could answer that they currently feel more tired and less alert at school, but may feel that the adjustment of the school day schedule was positive enough to make up for this. With this being taken into account, 43% of respondents reported that they cannot (yet) tell if the new start times have been beneficial to the student body as a whole. However, many of these respondents noted seeing impacts of the new start times, but may not yet be able to figure out whether certain positive impacts outweigh negative ones, or which negative impacts outweigh positives. Furthermore, 36% believe that the new start times have been beneficial to students, while 21% say that they have not.

As the year goes on and students continue to adjust to the newly introduced start times and schedule, check future Mouth of the River publications and mor.news for updates on students’ reactions to life around ORHS. [M1](#)



New Face, New Opportunites

“Wherever your imagination has you, I guarantee you, it’s possible.”



This year, Oyster River High School introduced a new position to the Counseling Department and a new member to their staff. Sean Peschel is ORHS’s first Extended Learning Opportunities Coordinator (ELO Coordinator) and works with students, teachers, and local businesses to create opportunities more available to everyone.

In Spring 2017, the Oyster River school board passed a new policy, which went into effect on July 1st, adding an ELO Coordinator to the staff at the high school. ELOs have been around in the state of New Hampshire for about 10 years and are responsible for working with students looking to further their education in a variety of different ways.

Sean Peschel has been working in education for 17 years. He began his career as a high school social studies teacher in Claremont, New Hampshire and also taught in Somersworth, New Hampshire. Peschel went on to receive his masters in counseling. His first job as a counselor was at Somersworth High School, where he primarily worked with juniors and seniors enrolled in the Career Tech Programing. He then went back for his Career in Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) and became an administrator at the Rochester Career Tech Center at Spaulding High School. After a few years, he decided that as much as he loved his administrative role, he wanted to get more involved with students, which brought him to ORHS.

Currently, Peschel oversees approximately 80 students at ORHS taking VLACS (Virtual Learning Academy Charter School) classes and is working with nine students in the high school to create their own ELOs. Programs such as CATS (Challenging Academically Talented Students), a program that connects ORHS students with classes at the University of New Hampshire, and Career Tech Schools at Somersworth, Rochester and Dover, still go through the school counselors.” “What’s cool about ELOs is the student is in the driver’s seat. It’s whatever the student wants to research or learn about or experience or further dive into, and it’s my role as a coordinator to provide the process or the management of it,” said Peschel, adding that he frequently connects students with experts in their field of interest.

Peschel explained the four categories of the opportunities available for students at ORHS. The first is an Advanced Study, which is where a student can create a class that is not offered at the next level. For example, Pottery 1 and 2 are provided as options to students, but there is no Pottery 3 class. If a student is greatly interested in pottery, they can work with Peschel and a teacher to create their own coursework and get credit for a ‘Pottery 3’ class.

The next ‘level’ on the ELO pyramid is Independent Coursework, which is another way to say Independent Study. Similarly to an Advanced Study, this opportunity is for students who are willing to create their own opportunities because the class is not offered at the high school at all or is not available to a student because of scheduling. Most online classes like VLACS would fall into this category.

Thirdly, students can take advantage of Career Explorations, which is the equivalent of a job shadow. Students have a first look at a future job they may be interested in and have the ability to reflect on their experiences. This opportunity is additionally offered through Economics which is traditionally taken during junior year.

The fourth option for students is an Internship or an unpaid work experience. These opportunities primarily go through Heather Healy, who teaches Economics at the high school, and will vary depending on the internship selected.

Riley Chinburg (‘18) has been using ELOs since the very beginning of his high school career. He began using VLACS before his freshman year in order to get ahead in math, a field he is very passionate about. He believes that a lot of students use these opportunities to get ahead in high school.

His ELO credits don’t end there. He took Latin 1 and 2 through VLACS, Precalculus through Khan Academy before his sophomore year, and a number of classes at UNH through the CATS program including Linear Algebra, Mathematical Proofs, Topology, and Abstract Algebra. He is currently finding a way to take Latin 3 after school and is working with Peschel to create an Independent Study for Computer Programing because his UNH courses don’t allow him to take the regularly scheduled class during the ORHS school day.

Chinburg said, “I would recommend VLACS classes to others if they are really good with time management, and are able to actually do



Gould is welcomed to her new school in Sevilla, Spain.

classes if there is no set deadline and figure it out for themselves. I would definitely recommend UNH classes, especially if people are really interested in one subject and want to go all the way with that [subject].”

Emma Hilary Gould (‘19) is currently living out her ELO in Sevilla, Spain. Unlike other ELOs, where the student will work with Peschel to create a curriculum, Gould’s ‘curriculum’ will be living and engaging in the culture of Spain. She worked with CIEE, a Portland based nonprofit, to set up the project because when she started working on this project the ELO position at ORHS had not been created yet. In Gould’s ELO she will focus on documenting what this experience teaches her and how to share that with others. She is also exploring what it means for her to be an American and how her time abroad answers that.

Emma Hilary Gould (‘19) said, “It’s been good to have someone on board as enthusiastic about your project as you are. There’s a really ‘anything’s possible’ attitude with [Peschel] and I feel that’s important with a person in his line of work.”

The benefits of these opportunities are not limited to the students. The new addition of the ELO has allowed the school counselors to focus more on the goings on of the school. Kim Sekera, a school counselor at Oyster River High School, said the presence of an ELO coordinator, “won’t change my job, [but] it will enhance some things that we as counselors have tried to support and encourage.”

The most notable change the new position allowed for was in regard to VLACS, a virtual learning school that provides online classes to students in New Hampshire. VLACS offers student opportunities to get ahead in a subject, but the little communication between the VLACS teachers and the counselors made the program hard to track.

“We don’t have the capacity to monitor progress [on VLACS], whereas for class here, counselors are keeping tabs on how students are doing and if they fall behind, teachers are in contact with us, and we know about it,” Sekera states. A good portion of Peschel’s job is monitoring VLACS progress, checking in with students, and ensuring that they are up-to-date.

Emily Schuman (‘20), who is hopeful to do an Internship in her future, said, “Internships seem like a good way to learn about something you are interested in, without having to sit through a class. They also seem like

a good way to get your foot in the door and get a taste of what the job is.” She added that the position of the ELO Coordinator would be a great resource for her questions, ideas or concerns.

If interested in an ELO or any other opportunity that the school has to offer, Peschel encourages students to see their school counselor to connect with the appropriate coordinator. There are a number of opportunities here at Oyster River High School that can stretch students academically, prepare a career, and shape their future.

According to Gould, students can’t wait around for an opportunity to come to them, because it won’t. “Wherever your imagination has you, whether that’s an internship, a research project, or a chance to swap cultures, get onto Google, do a little research and make that a reality, because I guarantee you, it’s possible.” 



Gould with two other foreign exchange students.

- Jordan Zercher

What Does Your Water Bottle Say About You?



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Not everyone loves drinking water, but everyone needs it. With hundreds of options to choose from for your method of H2O transportation, finding the right water bottle may be difficult. Whether you realize it or not, these choices are important; your decision says a lot about you.

With an increasing number of competitors entering the water bottle market, original companies are forced to find their niche audience or up the ante. Many have decided to go the visual marketability route, focusing more on physical appearance than functionality. Water bottles today are becoming an outlet for users to say something about themselves -- to be used as a means of personal expression.

Laurel Gordon (ORHS '19), sports a sticker-coated, narrow-mouth Nalgene. She takes it everywhere she goes. "It's a way to showcase who I am. If you were to look at my water bottle, you could tell that I'm a runner, that I wear birkenstocks, that I like food, and that I'm a well-rounded person who likes to do a lot of outdoor things." Gordon appreciates when others have unique or personalized water bottles. She added that they can act as conversation starters.

With this outlet for expression comes profiling. Believe it or not, people are judging you based on your water bottle. Whether you have a team issued gatorade bottle or a beat up Nalgene covered in stickers, your water bottle offers a glimpse at what your interests are and how you hope others will perceive you. Hannah Jane Wilson ('18) admits to profiling others based on their water bottles. "If they're drinking from a 1000mL water bottle, it says the person actually cares about drinking water, whether they're an athlete or just someone who knows the importance of hydration. The smaller water bottles are usually just for the sake of having it." She adds, "I know people who have bought expensive water bottles just because they're aesthetically pleasing. They don't even drink out of them; one of my friends doesn't even bother to fill it, it's just there to make [her_] look cool and healthy."

With all of these options, where does one begin? The following descriptions can shine a light on some of the pros and cons of these water bottles, as well as many stereotypes with which they are associated.

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Gatorade Bottle

Every single person in the world who plays any sport at all owns a gatorade water bottle. Heck, the gatorade water bottle that you're drinking from right now probably isn't even yours. If you use one of these convenient, share-with-everyone bottles as your day-to-day water transporter, you're probably an uber athlete. You had a hockey workout before school, and you have to leave early for your soccer game, but keep an eye on the time because you certainly can't miss that club lacrosse practice later tonight. You expect your water to be available when it's needed, whether you're spraying it through a facemask or trying to prevent that inevitable "fffpptt" it makes after every sip during a silent math test.



Blender Bottle

If your preferred water holder is a Blender Bottle, you probably spend more time at the gym than you do at home. Your instagram is filled with photos of gym mirror selfies, your "not-flexed" biceps huge as you show off your blender bottle. It is usually filled with protein shakes; water is a mere substitute when you've run out of protein powder or you don't have the time to whip together a muscle-building concoction. The metal ball meant for mixing shakes remains at the bottom of the cup, clanking about as you take a sip. Your water may be tainted by hints of smoothie or shake residue, but quite honestly, you're so used to the flavor that you don't notice.



Mason Jar

Let's all be rational here. Mason jars are for home canning, maybe to be used for some nifty DIY project pulled from the depths of Pinterest. They aren't water bottles. There is simply no practicality. They're no good for on-the-go hydration, as there are too many pieces to the lid, and the opening is so wide that you'd be lucky if any of the water actually ended up in your mouth. Yet despite these inconveniences, there seems to be a considerable population of mason-jar-water-drinkers. If you're one of them, you probably know all the aesthetic coffee shops within a 50 mile range, and you spend your free time taking photos to make your Instagram feed look good. When you found your Grandma's pickling mason jars in her basement you were ecstatic and more than eager to show off how hipster and trendy your mason jar makes you look.



S'well

The S'well is like that girl in your English class who always has new, fashionable outfits. Slim and sleek, there is an overwhelming number of colors and patterns to choose from. Your S'well is a fashion statement, and you know it. S'well owners aren't water-guzzlers, as the typical bottle size is only 17 oz. While there is a larger model, at 25 oz, it is still smaller than many of its competitors. It's likely that you have a few different S'well bottles, and you decide which to use based on how well they match your outfit for the day. You keep up with the newest trends, so you were either first to purchase a S'well or hopped on the bandwagon soon after. However, S'well owners watch out: Hydroflasks are increasing in popularity, and I wouldn't be surprised if many of you are considering making the switch.



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Whichever means of water transportation you choose, make sure to sport it proudly. The need for hydration will never subside, and water bottle profiling and expression is here to stay. Try out a few models, but in the end, stick with what works best for you. Happy hydrating! 

Nalgene

Nalgene's are timeless. Whether it's brand new and unscathed, or beat up, stickered, and missing the lid loop, Nalgene's seem to withstand the test of time. While other "fad" water bottles come and go, Nalgene's remain a strong candidate in the search for the perfect water bottle. If the Nalgene you're carrying in your bag right now is plain, you use it for its functionality. They get the job done: maximum water capacity and dependable durability. If it's covered in stickers, or there are bracelets hanging from the handle, you're expressive. You want everyone to know that you're into sustainability, that you visited the Grand Canyon, or that you really believe the whales need saving. There seems to be an unspoken competition of who can acquire the most artsy/hipster sticker collection on their water bottles. Admit it: you feel accomplished when someone compliments your stickers or asks you questions pertaining to them. Plus, they are nice to look at. Of course you have your favorite sticker, and you dwell for days to find the perfect overlapping position to stick your newest addition.



Disposable Plastic Bottle

I like to believe that the use of plastic water bottles is not as rampant as it once was. This may be true, but there are certainly still people who use them. Whether you use them because they're easy to grab on the go or because you like the "taste," you're probably missing the big picture. These bottles are BAD for the world. I can't imagine that plastic water bottle users have somehow managed to get this far in life without having seen a video or article on the harmful effects these bottles have. Maybe you don't believe in climate change, maybe you just don't care. If you stopped using bottled water, you would not only save money, but take a step towards saving your planet. If it's the taste of bottled water which acts as the draw, try a water purifier that you can fill and keep in the fridge for ready-to-drink water. If, for whatever reason, you find yourself in a pinch and the acquisition of one of these bottles unavoidable, then please, at least recycle it.



Hydroflask

The number of hydroflask owners is rapidly increasing. Maybe it's the newest fad on the block, coming in to replace the S'well craze, or maybe Hydroflasks are here to stay. Although they are expensive, they offer a wide variety of colors, sizes, and lid styles, making it a versatile bottle accommodating numerous lifestyles. Their main appeal? Your water stays *cold*. You can fill it up with ice, forget it in your car for a week, and the temperature will still be just below cool. After having spent years struggling with the condensation from the ice water in your non-insulated bottle, the Hydroflask is here to save the day. You couldn't care less about that data which proves room temperature water is easier for your body to digest -- you want your beverage to be refreshing.



Failure: Finding its place in an age of success

The all too familiar PowerSchool logo pops onto your screen as you check your grades for the third time today. Even though you only took that test a few periods ago, you're confident that it will have already been factored into your class average. Nerves find their way from your stomach to your hands as you hope the hours of studying and extra practice you did last night paid off. After a few seconds of impatient finger tapping, the display finally loads in front of disappointed eyes: a 75.

To many students at Oyster River High School, this C might as well have been an F. The fear of failure, both academic and otherwise, has slowly become entrenched within both the district and community, often times causing more harm than good. In part, this is due to the fact that many have trouble understanding why failure is not something to be feared, but instead, something that needs to be embraced if a person is to grow as a learner and an individual moving forward.

"Failure is both scary and hard, and [it] can be difficult to accept that because it makes us feel vulnerable. I'm definitely scared of failing in school because we're always told that everything we do now will affect our futures, and that we have to make good decisions now so that we have options later," said Julianna Caldicott ('19).

The pressure of feeling this need to do well in school now, in order to achieve success within the coming years, lives inside almost all of us, but some may argue that it is even more distinguishable at Oyster River. "I think that there's a lot of inherent social pressure [at the high school]. We do live in a university community, so we have a lot of professors, as well as a lot of professionals, that went to college and graduated, or maybe even went to medical school.... so there might be implied or explicit pressure from parents for their kids to do well, too," said Jason Baker, one of the high school's student counselors.

This pressure, implicit or otherwise, may also stem from the fact that many students have not yet identified the differences between the two main types of failure that exist, and how there are opportunities for success hidden right underneath the surfaces of both. For simplicity's sake, let's call the first type accomplishment-based, which occurs when someone did not achieve what they set out to do despite putting in valid effort, and the second type performance-based, which occurs when someone does not achieve a certain outcome solely due to a lack of productivity or effort.

While the latter can easily be corrected through basic self-advocation such as: being more attentive, taking better notes, and maybe even seeing teachers for extra help, accomplishment-based failure does not have a fix that is quite as simple. This is because in most cases, all of the previously listed things are already being done, yet the final result may still not match the expectations that come alongside these progressive actions.

"In the classroom, I have really high expectations for myself, but sometimes they're too ambitious and lead me to believe I've failed. It's hard to accept that nothing I ever do will be perfect," said Caldicott.

Caldicott's point is valid. When compared to perfection, failure will always be less desirable... but that's okay. Looking at things more literally, Merriam-Webster defines failure as "an omission of occurrence or performance," which is almost the antonym for perfection. However, when examined on a more personal level, this conflict can be explained by a variety of different mindsets about the definitions of these two words.

"I think we often forget that people define both success and failure differently. For some people, success is determined by what sport team you make, what part in the play you get, or by what your GPA or SAT score is. Failure is the same way. Nobody is going to see the world in the same way, meaning that one person's B is another's F," said Anna Haight ('19).

Baker agreed, adding, "don't look at things as being black or white: it isn't a direct question of success or failure. Instead, look at the shades of grey. As an individual, if things didn't go the way you originally wanted them to, you can identify what went well, what didn't, and how you can be better in the future."

Such self-reflection is key when adapting to failure. Haight, who considers herself very open to the concept of learning through mistakes, noted that, "Failure has taught me many things, perhaps the most important being resilience. When life presents you with a series of setbacks it's easy to want to give up... but failure has made me flexible. If something doesn't

work the first time, I am more likely to ask myself what went wrong and then try a new technique for success, instead of just continuing to use the same method that failed me originally."

Andrea Drake, a math teacher at the high school, shared a similar opinion. "I think that failure enhances your future success, because it allows you to have a level of comparison. If you can see where you've failed in the past, and where you've come from since then, it gives you perspective in the now. Perseverance and personal resilience can both be enhanced by experiencing some form of failure, because it gives you both perspective and clarity about what success is supposed to look like."

Speaking to a similar image of perspective, Baker argues that true success requires failure. "The later you go in life without experiencing a sense of failure despite valid effort, the harder time you'll have rebounding from it. [In] high school, you can have smaller failures, or even larger failures that just don't have large implications, but the longer you go, the higher the stakes get," he said.

Reiterating the importance of failure in a high school setting was Mark Lawrence, a science teacher at Oyster River. "Failure is how we learn. If you aren't failing you aren't learning, and it's important to actually practice failure in school because that makes you much better at

being able to benefit from it in order to not make the same mistakes again."

However, this in-school practice might be easier said than done. Many students, such as Haight, see Oyster River as a stepping stone to an even more competitive world. "Once you hit high school it just becomes a place to beef up your transcript so you can look good to colleges," she said before continuing, "everyone is so focused and wrapped up in their future that they sometimes forget to live in the present, myself included. Failing has morphed into a big deal at the high school level because people feel like their whole lives are at stake over a few numbers in the computer, which will mean almost nothing in a few years."

While this may be true, students aren't going to drop everything they've been working so hard for just to learn how to fail. However, they don't need to. In the words of Baker, "even above success, there's a more immediate lesson of reminding ourselves that we aren't perfect, and that not everything goes the way we want it to. When met with failure, there's always going to be another opportunity in the world, with second and third chances sometimes being even better than the first."

-Devan McClain

Oyster River Has a Homework Problem



With a school board sponsored survey on homework coming mid-October, it's time to re-examine the issue of homework at Oyster River. Students often bemoan the heavy work loads and late nights spent laboring over assignments. Between clubs, athletics, and school work, students often find themselves without enough time in a day.

Oyster River is a community that pushes students to work their hardest. Students are encouraged to do extracurriculars and take on difficult classes. This is in part due to the strong academic community that we have, but it's also due to a pressure to look good on college resumes. These issues are mounting, and I seek to explore them further through the course of the year.

"I always try to get it done, but most of the time it involves staying up later than I would like, or getting it done the next day during other classes," says Xiana Twombly ('18). Twombly, who takes six classes and plays a sport for each season, often finds herself working late and sacrificing class time to finish assignments. This is an experience shared by the many so-called "over-achievers" at Oyster River. Students who take six or seven rigorous classes with multiple extracurriculars often seem like superheros, but under that impressive exterior, what is being given up?

"I'll have to give my free period to an extracurricular... I'll be working sometimes for seven hours at home," says Ben Antognetti ('18,) who takes six classes in addition to regular volunteering, participating in Math Team and French Club, and holding a position as Treasurer of the National Honor Society.

Antognetti works hard to manage his course loads and responsibili-

ties, going so far as to skip some or all of his meals in the day, "The one thing I have had to give up is quality of life. Like how much sleep I get, when I eat... I don't think I ever eat breakfast." Why is he leading this lifestyle?

Antognetti says he does a lot of extra work because he really likes it, remarking on his love of French Club, but also admits that getting into an elite college is a big priority, "If I want to get into those top tier colleges, if I want to get those scholarships, then I have to be doing these extra things... Everything has to happen and everything has to come together."

Challenge is good; it helps us learn more effectively and keep us engaged, but a lot of work is not always the sort of challenge a student needs. Students are being tested less by difficult work, but by their ability to balance excessive homework with personal lives and extracurriculars.

"If kids are going to want to take that many classes, and if we value everything we teach, then you can't sandwich everything into one day and expect that you're going to do a good job of it. There's too many pots on the stove right now, so something has to give," says Barbara Milliken, a French teacher at Oyster River. Milliken feels that scheduling and homework-centric attitudes have forced us to put too much into the day.

Who's to blame when students take seven classes and are subsequently overloaded with homework? Is it the culture of assigning homework arbitrarily? Or is it the students who take on more than they can handle?

Milliken says, "it's easy to pass the buck and say well then that student probably shouldn't take that many classes... teachers try so hard to craft these lessons that are so important that we lose perspective of the fact there are kids that have six other classes that are also giving the same amount of homework." By the standards of our community, students at Oyster River simply aren't excelling without taking on these course loads. Producing students attractive to top colleges has taken priority over their wellbeing. The pressure is building, and has been for years.

If something is going to give, it's going to be the students. We've created a machine that produces resumes but runs on high schoolers. It makes a hell of a GPA but is light on the morning toast. It's great for college prep—we'll be ready for 3 AM study sessions.

College and academic excellence are good things. Students clearly strive to be exceptional, even without college pressure, but we need to evaluate how homework affects the Oyster River experience. How much is worthwhile? How can classes be organized more effectively? Most importantly, what does it mean to have a seven hour school day if homework prolongs it past dinner?

As these issues persist, I will be exploring them in greater depth. What solutions are already being discussed? How do these issues play off of eachother? There is no time like the present to explore these problems. Unless we as a community sit down and address them, they're here to stay. 

-Nicholas Dundorf

CONSIDER CANADA!

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“From what I gathered, the top universities in Canada place top in the world, yet are still less expensive than any US university, most colleges, and even some state schools,” said Owen Ammann, ORHS alumni and current student at McGill University located in Montreal, Quebec Canada.

Although it is commonly said that a high school student’s most difficult year is junior year, senior year is arguably just as stressful. For some, it’s figuring out how to spend their gap year traveling to amazing places while also making a dime or two so they can actually afford university. For others, it’s the stress of the Common App, college essays, and teacher recommendation letters on top of all their school work. Why go through the stress of either when you can have the benefits of both? Why not consider Canada?

According to the Website STUDENT LOAN HERO, “A Look At The Shocking Student Loan Debt Statistics For 2017”, there is a distressing \$1.45 trillion worth of US student loan debt, leaving 44.2 million Americans in debt. Cost is as an ever increasing worry factor for families looking into US colleges.

“Schools in Canada for an entire undergraduate degree (3 or 4 years depending on the school) can cost less than one year of school in the US...Degree of debt upon graduation with an undergraduate degree from a Canadian school can be drastically lower,” said Michelle Harriton, a former graduate of a Canadian university. Her son, Ben Harriton (‘18) is also considering schools in Canada such as: University of Prince Edward Island, University of Toronto, and Dalhousie University.

Cost, however, is not the only benefit to a university in Canada. “I prefer the process of admittance in Canada better. All you have to do is provide transcripts and a basic application. There is no need for tests or recommendation letters,” said Ben Harriton. He has recently been accepted to University of Prince Edward Island, two weeks after sending in his transcript. You read that right. No standardized tests to freak out about, or college essays to cry over. As a high school senior myself, I know my applications to the Canadian universities I’m looking at are causing me much less stress.

Does Canada seem too good to be true yet? Cost and the ease of the application process has been mentioned, but what about the actual experience of living there?

“At the time, I was more interested in the fact that McGill was located right in downtown Montreal. I also liked that there were so many international students at the school. Those two things made it feel more like the real world to me. Other universities I had visited had felt like a weird bubble world with entire towns built around a school. I also liked that I could get an international experience while only being a short bus ride to my parent’s house...Montreal was a fun city, but also safe and affordable,” said Erin Wallace, alum of McGill University.

Keeping in mind Canada is a massive country, location is a key component when researching whether it’s the right option for you. The quick car and plane rides to Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, three of Canada’s most well known cities, renders them completely accessible from where we are on the East Coast. Montreal is the closest at a four hour drive. Ottawa is six hours. Toronto is the farthest with a nine hour drive. That is closer than a drive to Washington D.C. and still doable in a day! A big city is not to everyone’s taste. However, Canada offers a wealth of universities in many different locations, some very remote. My suggestion would be to first think about where you want to be. A city, or a more secluded location? It is also important to think about distance from home when choosing a university. While you might be happy with a quieter, less urban campus, you may be uncomfortable with going quite as far as Nova Scotia, for example. The same applies to city living. Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal may be accessible, but Vancouver is much farther out. If you had some kind of an emergency or crisis, you should keep in mind it would obviously be much harder to reach your family.

Toronto and Ottawa are home to two of the most well reputed universities across the globe. According to TOP UNIVERSITIES, “Top Universities In The World 2018”, University of Toronto ranks 31st. A noticeable pattern with these cities, too, is their level of safety.

“Montreal was a fun city, but also safe and affordable.”

Having visited Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto myself on multiple occasions I find that laid back atmosphere with the balance of still being in a city refreshing.

One of the difficulties when researching Canadian universities is accessibility. The logistics of campus tours and visits can be problematic, especially if you’re going very far afield. Fortunately, many Canadian universities visit the US for college fairs and high school visits. In fact Exeter High School hosted a “Consider Canada” college fair that I was able to attend last year. This event provided me with an abundance of material and was an invaluable tool in my research. I would highly recommend keeping an eye out and attending one of these fairs to gather information.

If you’re looking for cost effective, a cultural experience, low stress applications, and a quality of education that is bound to set you on the right path, I strongly encourage you, consider Canada! 

- Hannah Croasdale

HOW TO DEAL WITH A JOB YOU DON'T LIKE (FOR YOUNG ADULTS)

Work can be a pain. For the most part, we’re all obligated to do it at some point in our lives, even when it’s inconvenient. Sometimes, you get stuck in job that doesn’t suit you and you don’t know what to do about it. It can potentially add unnecessary stress to your everyday life, and juggling school and extracurricular activities can make it harder to handle. But there are useful ways to get around this problem.

Befriend some new people

Sometimes having friends with you can make unpleasant times a little bit more bearable. Don’t be afraid to interact with and befriend some coworkers; mutually complain together, tell stupid stories to pass time, or even make plans to go out and grab a burger down the street. Who knows, you might make a life long friend in the process.

Give yourself something to look forward to after your shift is over

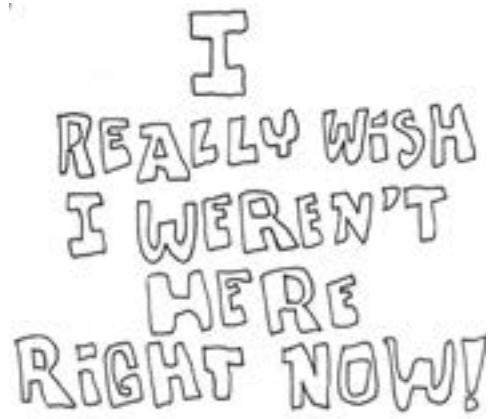
Treat yo self. Buy some chips and guacamole, go look at some Rolexes, or simply visit a friend to brighten your mood after work. The sheer thought of having something fun to do after you clock out can put you in a positive mindset, and acting upon that plan can give you a sense of fulfillment. The completion of a task can be very beneficial mentally since accomplishment helps your self-esteem, which work can sometimes damage.

Find ways to entertain yourself

Work can get slow, maybe because there are little to no customers coming in, or you’re ahead on your work. Attempt to make origami out of receipts, create the world’s longest paperclip chain, assemble houses out of post-it notes, or even sculpt mythical creatures out of ice cream. Or you could do something a little less conventional: “Playing with your coworkers’ hearts is fun, too,” says Katie Clark, an employed UNH student, who often dates other employees. Doing homework is a good idea too, but just make sure there is no one to yell at you for it. Matt Nixon (‘18), often found himself “cleaning random stuff” around the restaurant to kill time,” at his first job at Subway

Frequently remind yourself that you’re getting paid

Nothing like making money to boost your mood! Mentally calculate how much you’re gonna make for the week if you get bored, or doodle some dollar signs on your hand to give you a morale boost. If the money you’re making is incredibly disappointing and you feel underpaid, ask for a raise or at least bring it up to your boss; there’s nothing wrong with asking. “I’d wait a decently long time before I asked so that I could get get to know my employers better,” says Patty Anderson (‘19). In fact, it is actually illegal for businesses to prohibit discussing work conditions with its employees. If you do end up asking, make sure you do it respectfully and coherently.



Make sure you have a schedule you can tolerate

Typically, when you first get hired for a new job, they ask you what your availability is, and they usually stay within your preferences. Know not to bite off more than you can chew; don’t tell your employers that you can work six days a week from 3:00pm-10:00pm when you also have clubs, school, and sports to maintain. And if work does schedule you on a day that is not on your availability, don’t hesitate to call them out; it’s commonly a scheduling mishap that you’re not at fault for.

Nixon said that his first job was easily his worst: “there was no communication between the manager and employees. . . It was a really unhealthy environment.” Communication is key when being employed, or else you might find yourself in a tough situation: “They didn’t even let me have my birthday off,” says Nixon.

If you do quit, there’s nothing wrong with that

Sometimes, the best thing to do is just wave the white flag when things become too overwhelming and stressful, especially when you are juggling both school and employment. In actuality, there is no ‘perfect’ time to quit a job; some might tell you to wait six months before leaving, some might say that you should quit whenever you’re ready. At the end of the day, your happiness matters the most and it should always be a priority. But if you’re concerned that it will affect your resume negatively, just leave it off. Liam Mills (‘18) is one of the few who thoroughly enjoys his job at Dunkin Donuts, but would know what to do if things didn’t turn out the way he planned. “I’d give it a second or third chance and give it time to see if it got better. And if it didn’t, I would just put in my two weeks.”

So if you feel like you’re struggling with your place of employment, be sure to try these things first before you give up. A lot of people are in the same boat with you in regards to not being happy with where they are in the workforce. 

-Jess Speechley

The End of an Age?

As the rain pounds on the roof and your parents' Norah Jones album emanates from the speakers, you lay sprawled on the living room floor, leafing through the photographs overflowing from the cracks in the cardboard box by your side. The photos take you on a chronological journey, beginning with your grandparents, extending throughout your parents' youth, and culminating with your childhood. You turn over the most recent photo; it's of you as a baby, and the sharpie date on the back reads 2002. After that, life seems to drop off a brink — the photo history abruptly halts; fifteen years appear to be missing.



Digital photography didn't overtake film until the early 2000s, and yet when it did, it seemed to take the entire country with it — although not necessarily for the better. With fast-advancing technology, we may be facing a “lost-century,” in terms of both physical content and beauty of the age-old art.

Cathi Stetson, a photographer and programming teacher at Oyster River High School, relies primarily on digital photography. However, she fears that in doing so, much of her work will be lost. She has already found that photos stored using early digital means may be irretrievable. “The other day I was going through an old file of pictures. There were several 5 ¼ floppy disks holding photos, but I can't get to them... and that makes me nervous.”

Technology is progressing faster than we can keep up. What may have been cutting-edge and innovative in the early 2000s (such as floppy disks, certain hard drives, and various memory cards) is now quickly becoming obsolete. Remember those photos from your trip to Europe that your family has stored on that hard drive, or in that computer program? When was the last time you checked in on them? There's a good chance that the hard drive doesn't connect, and the program can't run, on your newest computer. Sure, you can argue that there are always converters, but as time progresses, the tools for accessing out-of-date storage devices become less frequently used, and in turn, more expensive.

So how can we combat this destructive tidal wave of technological innovation? Some have returned to older practices, such as film photography, while others have simply begun printing their photos.

I'm sure many of you scoff. Is this actually an issue? Is there real potential that all your files may be erased? According to Bruce Stocker, an Information Technology worker at ORHS, you're probably fine, if “you have at least two backups.” He advises to “backup [your files] twice a week, with one large backup per month.”

Now let's be real. When was the last time you backed up your files? Maybe you downloaded your photos from your phone to your computer, oh say, a year ago. So either A: make sure you have your info backed up on your computer, on a hard drive, in the cloud, and probably on some flashdrive at your overly-chipper neighbor's house for good measure, or B: switch to physical means of photo storage.

For some, it isn't all about the fear of losing the physical photographs, it's about the destruction of something intangible. “There's something lost in it,” says Tracy Bilynsky, ORHS photography teacher. “You're not going to sit in front of a computer and flip through pictures

— the intimacy of a photograph is different on a screen.” Bilinsky is not the only one who feels this way. Alex Malaison ('19) occasionally uses film and would do so more often if it weren't so expensive. “Shooting film is an experience for me; I love how simple and raw it is,” he says. “In this digital age, the whole dark room experience is lost.”

During our transition to this digital age, we also lose the certain significance of a photograph. Today, why do we take photos? Is it to find the perfect Instagram post? To build up our social profiles? We take thousands of pictures of the same image, trying again and again until we find the perfect shot. Scroll through your camera roll, and see if there are groups of photos, all of the same moment. There are so many that you simply lose the motivation to go through them. There they sit, untouched and insignificant, taking up space on your phone until you either delete them or slide them over to your computer, where they will remain, gathering mechanical dust until they become lost for good.

It used to be that photographs were used to capture a moment. You had one shot, maybe two if you were feeling frivolous, to capture what you saw with your eyes. Haley Brown Bloom ('19), an avid photographer, appreciates the thought that goes into a film photo. “They're usually much more intentional and thought through,” she says. “Plus, film photos give off a nostalgic feel that is impossible to create with digital, no matter how much editing you do.”

Go ahead and call me a hypocrite — I admit that I fall guilty of many of these rookie errors. But I also recognize that I could make a self-adjustment. It's certainly not hard. Start by taking photos to remember a moment. What really matters to you? Then, you could try printing some of them — choose your favorites, hang them on your wall. Finally, if you are feeling motivated, but don't feel like learning the art of film, go to your local drugstore and purchase a disposable camera. Take it on a trip. You'd be surprised by the satisfaction it brings when, months later, you finally take it back and have your photographs developed. “Waiting to get prints back is so exciting,” says Brown-Bloom. “It's like Christmas.”

Let us take a step back and remember that scene of you rifling nostalgically through old photos. Now flash forward to you as a parent. You're not going to leave some old, incompatible flashdrive out for your kids to stumble upon on that rainy day. Let's do our best to give them that cardboard box, to give them their own history through photographs. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words. 

-Eleanor Zwart

Oyster River Scores a New Athletic Director

“My favorite part of the day is going out and watching games, watching you guys compete and play, the excitement when there's a good crowd at a game. That's why I do it,” said Andy Lathrop, the new Athletic Director at Oyster River High School.

Last May, Corey Parker, the former Athletic Director at ORHS, announced that he would be transferring to Bedford High School after holding the position for seven years. Administration at ORHS started looking for a replacement immediately. Due to his experience and likeable personality, Andy Lathrop was selected for the position. He officially became the Athletic Director at ORHS in July of 2017, and since then has adapted well to the school.

Lathrop began his career at New England College as member of the hockey team, planning to major in business. After a neck injury his sophomore year, he was no longer able play. He began coaching and decided to switch his major to Physical Education. After college, he was offered a coaching position at his former high school. There, he coached girls' soccer, boys' hockey, and boys' lacrosse. After that, he got a job at Berwick Academy, where he worked for 15 years as the assistant athletic director and gained more coaching experience. In 2014, he accepted a job offer at Bishop Brady as Athletic Director; he worked there for three years before applying for the position at Oyster River.

“I always said if there was an opening closer to home, I would look at it,” explained Lathrop. His daily commute to Bishop Brady was over an hour long. “When I heard that Corey [Parker] was going to Bedford, I [thought] ‘Oyster River has a great reputation for athletics, but also for academics.’” He soon became one of roughly 40 applicants for the position.

“Oyster River has a great reputation for athletics, but also for academics.”

From these 40 plus applications received, administration narrowed down the pool to a select number of individuals to be interviewed by staff members. Of those, the number was narrowed down once again to four, who would meet with students and parents. Following this, the two remaining candidates met with the superintendent, James Morse. Lathrop was the final selection. Mark Milliken, the assistant principal at ORHS, said that Lathrop stood out because, “he had the right answers to all the questions, he has a lot of experience, and he really connected with kids.”

Parker was not involved in the hiring process but knows Lathrop as a colleague. Parker said, “I appreciate his student first leadership style.”

Charlotte Clarke ('18,) a member of the Girls' Varsity Soccer team, said that ORHS has welcomed him and that he has made his way into the Oyster River community. Clarke emphasised that he is always there to lend a hand, saying, “he's here to help everybody. He does whatever he can to help us out.”

‘Helpful’ seems to be a commonly used word to describe Lathrop. Maddie Glass ('18), a captain of the ORHS volleyball team, said that even though he is still learning the ropes at ORHS, “he wants to help us as much as he can.”



Both students and coaches have enjoyed Lathrop's new presence in the school. Scott McGrath, the Boys' Cross Country coach, said that it has been a very smooth transition. McGrath appreciates how Lathrop, “allows coaches to have ownership of what they do with their teams and really trusts their leadership.” McGrath feels as though Lathrop is a good resource, and explains, “I have his support when I need it, but I otherwise can effectively coach the team the way I think is best.”

Lathrop hasn't made any major sports-related changes at ORHS yet. He expressed he needs to get a feel for what's needed before he tries to fix or alter anything. He plans to take a look at the booster clubs, and make sure they are fundraising effectively and that the funds go towards something in the best interest of the whole school. Lathrop is also in the process of starting a Student Athlete Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.). The group meets once a week before school, and allows students to “have some ownership in the sports they play, and some say in what they want out of the program,” according to Lathrop.

It seems that everyone agrees it's been a fairly seamless transition. Millikan appoints this to the fact that Lathrop is “easy to get along with, [and] easy to speak with.” Parker also reports that they still talk frequently about the transition, explaining that when training him, “I could tell very quickly he was very proud and honored to be at OR.” Lathrop has enjoyed working at ORHS so far, and stated, “I've been fortunate to work at good schools, and this is definitely a good one too.” 

-Lydia Hoffman

The Road to Self Confidence

Bright blue braces with matching rubber bands, mismatched socks and a whole lot of neon, there I was - the typical freshman. Not only did I have the pleasure of being a freshman walking into a huge group of people who knew each other very well, I was also a new kid. I walked over, introduced myself to the coach, and turned to look at the faces of the girls who would become my new teammates. As we went around in a circle introducing ourselves, I grew more and more nervous as it became my turn. I spoke quietly and was quickly prompted to speak up, which was only a little mortifying. Of course, in this moment, I didn't know the effect that this team would end up having on myself, who I would become as a person, or my outlook on life as a whole.

“Self confidence is when you believe in yourself and you don’t let anybody stop you [from doing] what you want to do.”

Throughout middle school I, like many of my friends, had dealt with a lack of self-confidence. I had let pictures on social media, as well as the societal expectations of who I should be, force an idea in my head about how I should look and act. I struggled with finding ways to combat my low self-esteem, which left me feeling bad about myself, and thinking very poorly of who I was and what I was doing. As high school quickly approached, I found solace in running. It became my favorite thing - something I looked forward to every day. Joining the cross country team was a win-win situation for me, because I got to continue working on my own mental and physical strength while making new friends - both of which helped build up my self-confidence.

As I look back on my three previous years of cross country, I start to wonder about young girls today. How do they feel about themselves and their peers? What does self-confidence mean to them? Allowing my curiosity to take over, I set out to find these answers.

I had the opportunity to sit down with a group of girls at Moharimet Elementary School and talk to them about self-confidence. They are all part of a group called Girls on the Run, which is a nationwide organization that focuses on instilling values such as empowerment, optimism, and diversity in young girls. This was a great experience for me; I was able to gain some insight into the way today’s young girls’ brains are working, and see how they felt about themselves and others. I asked them what self-confidence was, and a slew of hands shot up, all eager to give their answer. The first girl said, “self-confidence is when you believe in yourself and you don’t let anybody stop you [from doing] what you want to do.” Another quickly followed by saying, “Saying ‘I can do this’ in my brain. And moving forward, even when it seems tiring and impossible.”

I don’t know about you, but I think I need to take some more life advice from eight year olds. These girls were 100% correct. It was such an inspiring moment to be able to hear these girls answer my questions and interact with each other in such a positive manner.

After this, I asked them how they could help each other feel more self-confident. Even more hands went up this time. These girls had some great ideas for providing encouragement to their peers. One said, “Encourage people and if they think they had a bad game, just say I think you did a really good job,” said one girl. Another stated that, “when somebody is not focusing or they’re just like not participating for some reason, I’ll try to throw a joke at them, or just like poke them, kind of annoyingly but funny, to cheer them up.” These are some strategies that I think we could all adapt and use in our own lives in some way. I left this meeting feeling as though an entire well of wisdom existed in the elementary age girls at this practice.

Gabby Verno attends Oyster River Middle School, where she is captain of her cross country team. Verno did gymnastics for many years, and eventually she decided to move on to a school sport. Her older sister ran cross country, so she decided to give it a try. “I think cross country has changed my outlook on life because I now have realized that it does not matter how fast or how good of a runner you are; it only matters how hard you try,” she said.

Verno touched upon one of the best things about the sport of cross country, something that I am so grateful for: it does not matter if you are a fast runner. Cross country teams everywhere are full of fast runners, average runners, slow runners. This is part of what helped me to feel so included on the team. Having all of these different groups to fit in with ensures that anyone who joins will find their niche group and make some long-lasting friends. Verno closed with, “running is a great sport and I love being able to do it with my friends.” I couldn’t agree more.

Kelsey Wiles (‘19) joined cross country freshman year because she had just finished a long career of dancing, and was looking for a change. She said, “I actually didn’t want to do cross country at all because I was just really uncomfortable with putting myself out there.” However, she persisted, and has stuck with running. Wiles noted that she has learned some valuable life lessons from running, saying, “I know for a fact that I have become a happier person because of running. I feel it everyday. Physically, it is kind of weird and empowering knowing that not everybody can run 6 miles and come back the next day for more.” She is definitely not alone in this belief.

Cross country, and running in general causes you to redefine your limits as a runner, which has a domino effect on all other limits you’ve set for yourself. Knowing that you’re able to redefine yourself and your abilities is such an empowering idea. Wiles closed by saying, “self-confidence is something that is built up over time and not everyone is going to find it in one place, but I know for sure running has contributed to mine. Especially with the vibe that ORGXC has, it’s a whole lot of love from a whole lot of people.”

Chloe Jackson (‘20) joined cross country when she moved here from Connecticut last summer. Jackson noted one of the best things about cross country, saying, “I was new to the area and wanted to join a fall sport to meet people. I figured cross country would be good because it didn’t require a specific skill.” Speaking for myself, I am one of the least coordinated people that I know, so contact sports were never an option for me. Running is judged and scored in a way that focuses on the runner themselves, which can lead to a lot less of that tense team dynamic that I’ve seen in other sports, following a difficult practice or a tough loss. Jackson continued on to say, “It’s showed me that I can surprise myself with the strength and determination I can have when I need it.” Running can often reveal to us some hidden attributes or qualities that we otherwise may not have discovered within ourselves. Jackson closed with, “Running has made me stronger physically and mentally, and has given me lasting friendships I wouldn’t have made any other way.”

“I know for a fact that I have become a happier person because of running. I feel it everyday. Physically, it is kind of weird and empowering knowing that not everybody can run 6 miles and come back the next day for more.”

Driving with the windows down, music blasting, anticipation bubbling up in my stomach. It's my last first day of cross country practice. The nerves and butterflies that I felt on this same day three years ago have been replaced with excitement and contentedness. I go into the senior season aware of all the responsibilities and privileges that come along with it. Being captain this year has really put the amount of change I've gone through into perspective. The running shoe's on the other foot now, and it's my responsibility to teach freshmen about self-confidence and self-worth. And frankly, I can't think of any responsibility that I would rather have.

-Anna Kate Munsey
Artwork Credit Chloe Jackson

The Show Must Go On

Profanity. Suicide. Nudity. Drugs. Sex.

Those things are not what this article is about. Many musicals, such as RENT, Spring Awakening and Next to Normal, contain many if not all of the things listed above, but that's not what's important about those shows. What's important is what we can learn from them, and the message they leave us thinking about.

Usually described as a depressing show about a group of poor artists with AIDS, RENT is the story of love and perseverance. Spring Awakening takes place in 1800s Germany and revolves around a group of teenagers experiencing their sexual awakening. Next To Normal focuses on a bipolar mother unable to cope with the passing of her son.

RENT has drugs, Spring Awakening has sex, and Next To Normal has suicide.

These shows, and their inherent vices, become the singular focus of school administrators when it comes to approving or rejecting a musical. In reality, profanity, drugs, and sex involved in these shows means nothing when you take into consideration what the shows are actually about. Shows like these aren't afraid to be honest. They tell it like it is. Especially at the high school age, it's important to be honest. Being able to perform or even just see shows like these allows a high schooler to experience this content in a safe place where they can feel comfortable discussing what they experienced.

Recent Portsmouth High School alum and current freshman at Columbia College Chicago, Ashley Cooper, is fortunate enough to have performed in shows such as RENT, Spring Awakening, Chicago, Les Miserables and The Wedding Singer. "Being a young adult, many of the issues I was dealing with in life were reflected in these shows. I was able to express myself and have an outlet where I could be honest," said Cooper.

She appreciates all the opportunities she's had to perform in these shows. She explained that she and her peers used these shows to talk about problems they were facing in their own lives. "In RENT, the cast formed

an incredible bond because we were able to talk about real life issues and the struggles some of us have faced that are often looked at as inappropriate," said Cooper. She continued talking about some of the shows'

main content: sex, violence, drug issues, and suicide. "Teens deal with all of these things, and when they are able to put their real life issues into their work, there can be an extremely powerful outcome." Performing and acting out the issues her characters faced allowed her to work through conflicts of her own.

Unfortunately, not everyone shares Cooper's outlook on these shows. "Being questioned about your art can be a very unsettling thing to any artist. Often times, the people that question it are the ones who are not artists themselves. They don't feel as deeply and as passionately as artists do," explained Cooper. She mentioned specifically that when she was in Spring Awakening, many people expressed concerns that teenagers were performing in the show. "The leads had to allow ourselves to be extremely vulnerable onstage. I was

playing a girl whose storyline was about her telling her friends that her father was beating and raping her. This role meant everything to me as an artist and as a person. Being told that this show shouldn't have been done by teens, even though it was written for teens, really hurt



Photo Credit: Ashley Cooper at Patrick Dorow Productions



Photo Credit: Ashley Cooper at Patrick Dorow Productions

my feelings." Through her work on stage, Cooper has become an advocate for teenagers wanting to express themselves through their art.

No matter an administrator's opinions on Cooper's views, they have a challenge making a decision that will not only affect the students involved, but the school as a whole. Oyster River High School Principal, Suzanne Filippone, struggles with finding this balance. "We try to balance everything. You have to be respectful of everyone's opinions. Balancing that sometimes means that you can't allow for something like that to happen," said Filippone. She explained that she does not share her personal opinions on these decisions and has to think strictly from the position of a principal.

For Filippone, she takes these situations as they come and always has multiple conversations with those involved before reaching a decision. "It depends on the context of the message. It depends on the play

I do see how performing controversial musicals and shows in general is a tough call for everyone involved. The administrators are taking a risk by approving it and the department takes on the challenge of performing the show in a respectful manner, but it is worth it. These shows give messages that can really impact a student. RENT teaches the audience to never give up, Spring Awakening shows you the importance of being honest, and Next to Normal highlights that not every story has a happy ending, and that's okay.

The point of art is to expand your own thinking. If you walk out of a theatre having learned nothing, something went horribly wrong. Sometimes what you learn can be simple and light; other times it's heavier and really makes you think. Either way, high school is a time when everyone is learning. That learning should transfer to the auditorium.

"Being a young adult, I was able to express myself and have an outlet where I could be honest."

[and] on the character development. I think there's a lot of different pieces that go into it," she explained. Filippone works hard to see the positives of performing controversial topics on stage, but has to keep in mind that she is making a decision that reflects the entire school. "Anything that is school sponsored automatically makes it a reflection of our school," explained Filippone. "It doesn't mean we agree with it, but it is a reflection of us, so that is definitely part of the decision."

I understand how hard this can be for an administrator. They are forced to take out their own opinions and do what they feel is best for the school as a whole. Filippone herself even said, "this is one of the hardest parts [of being a principal]... is making decisions like this." She continued, saying, "I want students to be able to express themselves and be able to have experiences... It's not easy."

From a young age, I have been going to see shows with PG13 or even R rated content, and I don't feel scarred by it. Quite the contrary, I feel it has left a positive impact on me. I am not afraid to speak my mind about any questions or concerns I have. No one ever hid this information to me, so in return, I am able to be honest with myself and others.

As a community, we need to stop being afraid of telling the truth. High schoolers are already very aware of everything that goes on in the shows mentioned above. It is not necessary to censor what we perform in a high school because it might make some people uncomfortable. We need to get past that. Instead, we can use these shows and the messages they have in a positive way. It's time to open the curtain on the truth. 

-Skylar Hamilton

The Rocky World Of Rock Climbing



“You could have all the confidence in the world [rock] climbing, but as soon as you step into the gym, you reset into nothing,” said Sean Fitzhenry (‘18) when asked about the mentality before and after you enter the climbing gym.

Rock climbing is a developing sport that has seen a surge of popularity in the last few years, with people of all ages taking up the sport in their free time. Rock climbing gyms such as Indoor Ascent in Dover, New Hampshire, have seen more and more people getting on the walls.

According to *Valley Uprising*, a documentary on the history of climbing that I highly recommend, when the sport started, it was first considered part of mountaineering. This included other wilderness activities, such as hiking and skiing, but climbing soon began to receive acceptance to become its own sport, separate from mountaineering. This was due to Rucksack Revolution, a movement that began in the 1960’s. This movement spurred from the book *The Dharma Bums*, written by Jack Kerouac in 1957. The book explores Buddhism and simpler, more fulfilling ways of life within climbing at Yosemite vs. the bustling city life.

This idea of a simpler, but more rewarding, lifestyle drew me into climbing. I heard about Indoor Ascent’s existence my junior year from Shawn Kelly, a teacher at ORHS and advisor for Mouth of the River. Kelly told me about his fun experiences rock climbing, which made me want to give it a go. I could never find the time juggling work and sports until my junior year. I decided to go and give it a try and absolutely loved it. The dedication and effort it takes to stick with rock climbing in order to improve is incredible, and unmatched by any other sport I have participated in within my lifetime.

I have met people of all ages climbing. Many of these people being around the same age, but some that have some years on me too, such as Chris Hobson. Hobson, a teaching aid at ORHS, has been climbing at Indoor Ascent for over five years, but going there with his daughter for over nine. “My daughter got me hooked,” says Hobson. “Just before she aged out of the competitive circuit and graduated from ORHS, she convinced me to start. She gave me my first pair of shoes and a chalk bag.”

When I first walked into Indoor Ascent, I didn’t know what to expect. I had no real experience with climbing at all. On the inside, the gym was a lot larger than it looked from the outside. The walls were filled with hand holds of all different shapes and sizes with ropes hanging down from the ceiling in the rope room. bIn the time that I found climbing, many others did as well. As I would regularly start spending my nights at Indoor, I began to see many other new climbers getting on the walls. Riley Kenyon, an experienced climber who works at Indoor Ascent, has also seen an increase in memberships. “Since I started here [at Indoor Ascent], there has been a slight increase in members, but the atmosphere has gone way up,” says Kenyon. Walking into Indoor Ascent, you can see the passion people have for the sport as they latch onto the walls and begin their climbs.

When climbing inside of a gym you will see a lot of different colored pieces of tape under the holds on the walls. This tape represents a route. A route is a specific climbing path that is made within a certain difficulty level. Routes are created by setters, who create routes for certain difficulty levels. They must be able to complete or “beta” the route for it to stay on the wall. As explained to me by Bryson Couture, an experienced climber of over five years, the rating system is typically from V0 to V10. I started to follow the routes marked by the tape and realized how difficult it was within the first hour and was already fatigued.

I got into climbing to not only hope to become stronger, but to also try and overcome mental barriers. I find a lot of times that I stick to the basics of what I know and believe I can do. Climbing pushes you past your limits when you put in the effort. You need to keep trying new routes in climbing to improve and keep moving forward. Couture felt early on that climbing would help him pass his own problems. “Early on, I began to feel that climbing was a physical metaphor to climbing past my own mental and physical obstacles,” says Couture.

Like all physical sports, climbing comes with its own set of dangers. Falling off the wall from a high spot can be dangerous. I have seen numerous people pull muscles and one young lady even dislocated her elbow. Even Kenyon once hurt himself while going for a risky move on the wall. “I got hurt climbing by going for a dyno, swinging too far, and hitting my back on a hold”, says Kenyon.

A dyno is a move where at least three of your limbs come off the wall. It’s always important to be well stretched and to stay within your limits. You do not want to be a new climber and immediately go for a very difficult route to climb. Hobson got seriously hurt while climbing a few years before even though he is an experienced climber. Hobson says, “I slipped off a hold on the bouldering wall, and when I landed on the thick mat underneath, my foot turned in. My weight came down on my leg, which resulted in a clean break in my fibula.”

Even though climbing has its risks, it’s well worth it. Anyone can give it a try and get on the wall. It also doesn’t take much gear if you are bouldering, which uses no harness. All you need is shoes and a chalk bag. “To new climbers, I recommend getting a decent pair of climbing shoes and to be committed to certain times a week for climbing sessions and to fit in figure workouts wherever you can, because they will pay off,” says Kenyon. Not only will you make progress with your climbing ability, but you also make progress socially as you can make strong friendships that will last a lifetime.

I have made strong friendships within the Indoor Ascent community, which was further proven after the loss of a fellow climber and great friend. The community came together to remember our fallen friend and all the memories we made with them climbing. 📺

-Hunter Madore



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